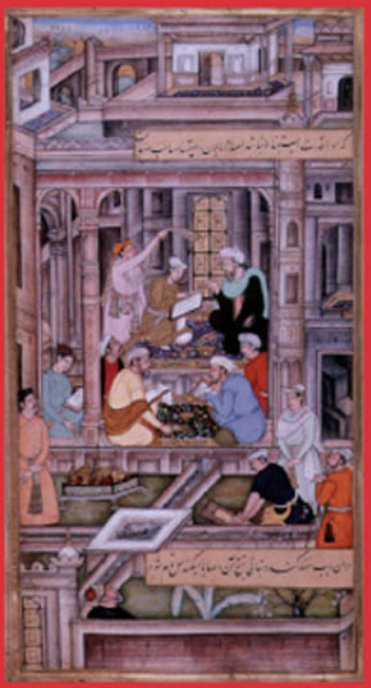
CULTURE AND MEMORY IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM

Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung



Edited by FARHAD DAFTARY
and JOSEF W. MERI

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Edited by
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The Institute of Ismaili Studies was established in 1977 with the object of promoting scholarship and learning on Islam, in the historical as well as contemporary contexts, and a better understanding of its relationship with other societies and faiths.

The Institute's programmes encourage a perspective which is not confined to the theological and religious heritage of Islam, but seek to explore the relationship of religious ideas to broader dimensions of society and culture. The programmes thus encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the materials of Islamic history and thought. Particular attention is also given to issues of modernity that arise as Muslims seek to relate their heritage to the contemporary situation.

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The Institute's academic publications fall into a number of interrelated categories:

1. Occasional papers or essays addressing broad themes of the relationship between religion and society, with special reference to Islam.
2. Monographs exploring specific aspects of Islamic faith and culture, or the contributions of individual Muslim figures or writers.
3. Editions or translations of significant primary or secondary texts.
4. Translations of poetic or literary texts which illustrate the rich heritage of spiritual, devotional and symbolic expressions in Muslim history.
5. Works on Ismaili history and thought, and the relationship of the Ismailis to other traditions, communities and schools of thought in Islam.
6. Proceedings of conferences and seminars sponsored by the Institute.
7. Bibliographical works and catalogues which document manuscripts, printed texts and other source materials.

This book falls into category two listed above.

In facilitating these and other publications, the Institute's sole aim is to encourage original research and analysis of relevant issues. While every effort is made to ensure that the publications are of a high academic standard, there is naturally bound to be a diversity of views, ideas and interpretations. As such, the opinions expressed in these publications are to be understood as belonging to their authors alone.

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Preface

I had been familiar with, and greatly impressed by, Professor Wilferd Madelung's scholarly contributions to Islamic studies through his publications. But I first met him late one afternoon, in March, 1985, in his office at The Institute of Oriental Studies in Oxford. The meeting had been arranged by my friend, and his colleague, Dr John Gurney. At the time, still living in Tehran, I was writing my first book on the history of the Ismailis and was very keen to receive Madelung's comments as the foremost contemporary authority in the field. He generously agreed to review my work and that was the start of an academic relationship – of a master and disciple type – that has continuously grown. Madelung reviewed my subsequent chapters as well, and saved me from making several errors, common or otherwise. That book was finally published several years later with his Foreword.

In time, I increasingly witnessed not only Madelung's unsurpassed mastery of the sources on the Ismailis, Zaydis and the early Islamic theological movements in general, among other areas of his interest, but also the totally selfless manner in which he has always been willing to share his knowledge with others. Indeed, several generations of students and colleagues have benefited, over the last four decades, from Madelung's tutorship and personal

guidance in Chicago, Oxford and London. Some of them have participated in the production of this Festschrift that honours one of the greatest, and most humane, Islamicists of our times. This collective volume is offered to Professor Madelung in gratitude and deep affection. All the contributors join me with Dr Josef W. Meri in wishing Wilferd *ad multos annos* and continued contributions to his many areas of Islamic history and thought.

F. Daftary

List of Abbreviations

AI	*Annales Islamologiques*
BEO	*Bulletin d'Études Orientales*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
EI2	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New edition), Leiden
EIR	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York and London
GAL	C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur,* Leiden
GAS	F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums,* Leiden
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JIS	*Journal of Islamic Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
MF	W. Madelung, *Maktabhā va firqahā-yi Islāmī* (tr.), J. Qāsimī, Mashhad
MME	*Manuscripts of the Middle East*
NS	New Series
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
REM	W. Madelung, *Religious and Ethnic Movements in*

	Medieval Islam, Hampshire
RSS	W. Madelung, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, London
TAPS	*Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

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1

Introduction

Josef W. Meri

Publishers and scholars have often lamented the proliferation of the Festschriften. As one distinguished colleague aptly observed, Festschriften are superfluous. Like other academic traditions, this unprofitable enterprise may well in time fade from the collective memory of academia, or at least, from the realm of conventional academic publishing. But as humanists we strive to preserve such time-honoured traditions of learning and scholarship, and not merely succumb to the latest trends. The prevailing sentiment in the Academy is that the Festschrift represents a long-standing ritual, a selfless undertaking, an enduring token of appreciation and an abiding commitment to honouring an esteemed friend, colleague and mentor, who has profoundly shaped our field and enriched our intellectual lives. In this humanistic spirit the present volume honours Wilferd F. Madelung, Laudian Professor of Arabic (emeritus) at the University of Oxford.

There is no branch of knowledge of medieval Islamic history and religion that Wilferd Madelung has left untouched. Few have been as prolific in the depth and breadth of their scholarship, while possessing the humility, humanity and perspicacity that he does. Professor Madelung is a humanist in the truest sense of the

word who has always eschewed the power and politics of academia and instead, dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge. Farhad Daftary briefly examines his intellectual contributions to the field in the biographical sketch which follows this introduction.

My association with Wilferd Madelung is perhaps more recent than that of all the contributors to this volume, as I was one of his last doctoral students at the University of Oxford prior to his official retirement in 1998. Fond memories of the time spent under his tutelage have left an indelible impression on me, as they undoubtedly have on other of his former students. What endeared him most to me as a mentor is his humility, and his ability to teach me to fully appreciate the nuances of texts and faithfully capture in translation their meanings. In brief, he taught me to become a better humanist. This volume represents a small token of lasting gratitude for the hours of selfless dedication to his students and colleagues.

It is a fitting tribute that the volume theme of culture and memory in medieval Islam honours Professor Madelung. In proposing this theme I was reminded of the Aleppan ascetic vagabond ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī (d.611/1215) who quite literally left an indelible impression on the places he visited throughout the Islamic world, the Mediterranean and Byzantium during the 12th-century CE. Al-Harawī, whom his biographers regarded as a trickster and magician, was known for leaving graffiti on those sacred and profane antiquities he visited. His *Kitāb al-ishārāt ilā maʿrifat al-ziyārāt*, his best-known work, is essentially a book of memories of sacred places. Al-Harawī's memories were lost, fragmented, reclaimed and reconfigured from what he could remember of those places he and his informants visited. Yet, his work survived and is testament to the magnificent and wondrous places that medieval Muslims, as well as devotees of other faiths and the peoples of bygone civilizations, venerated. Al-Harawī's *Kitāb al-ishārāt* was an *aide-mémoire* which served as the basis for other historical accounts of pilgrimage places and other Syrian pilgrimage works.

Like al-Harawī's work, the present volume represents a form of intellectual graffiti. As scholars, we commemorate, preserve and interpret the past, and in so doing we leave behind an indelible

impression. Our collective work, no matter how significant or minor, may be lost and rediscovered at some point in the future. Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that it will have the permanence of al-Harawī's guide.

The road to producing this Festschrift has been a long one. During the autumn of 1999, I was reminded of the need to organize a Festschrift for Professor Madelung. Emilie Savage-Smith and Paul E. Walker offered invaluable advice and suggested additional contributors in the early stages. Professor Madelung's wife, Dr Margaret Madelung, graciously and enthusiastically gave of her time to suggest potential contributors. After beginning the search for a suitable publisher, that winter Farhad Daftary suggested that we collaborate. It was fortuitous that Farhad with his extensive experience at The Institute of Ismaili Studies should propose a partnership and suggest publishing the volume with I.B. Tauris Publishers in association with the Institute.

It was decided to allow contributors the greatest leeway to broadly interpret one or both elements of the theme of culture and memory. Culture may be understood in an abstract or theoretical sense to refer to aspects of *thaqāfa* and *haḍāra* or, alternatively, to modern theoretical discourses on culture, in a ritualistic sense to festivals, celebrations, sacred rites and modalities of ritual behaviour, and in a physical sense to monuments and other architectural and art historical forms. Memory can refer to the faculty of memory, or to specific processes as in ways in which masters and their disciples transmitted and memorized sacred texts and traditions, or conversely, to forgetfulness and forgetting. Equally important is the role of memory in a textual context, as for instance, in historical writing, learning and geography, as well as in the perception and depiction of architectural and art historical forms. Memory can also be understood as remembrance and commemoration of individuals and dynasties in literary or architectural forms.

This volume is divided into three sections. The contributions in the first section focus on the transmission of knowledge. The second section deals with memorializing and remembering. The third section addresses the commemoration of rulers, dynasties

and conquests. Accordingly, contributors explore themes relating to memory, memorization and commemoration in a variety of historical, legal, literary and architectural contexts. Among other things, they examine lists and maps as memory aids, the transmission of knowledge and traditions from medieval to early-modern times, the application of medieval notions of law and statecraft, and the commemoration of individuals, civilizations and dynasties in historical and literary works, and on coinage and monuments.

The goal of this volume is not to present a complete picture concerning culture and memory in medieval Islam, but rather to highlight aspects of this theme. Many important aspects, particularly relating to architecture and art history, are not dealt with in the present volume. As readers will appreciate, some of the most notable Festschriften produced from the 1960s through 1980s in the fields of Islamic and Near Eastern Studies sometimes contained brief notes and useful bits of knowledge. As a rule, publishers no longer publish non-thematic Festschriften. Regrettably, this precluded a number of our colleagues from contributing.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to our co-editor and friend Farhad Daftary, who selflessly undertook the laborious task of editing the contributions and compiling the bibliography. I would also like to thank the administrative editorial team of the Institute's Department of Academic Research and Publications for their diligence and efficiency – in particular Julia Kolb, who assisted in the early stages, and Kutub Kassam with Nadia Holmes, who helped us to see this work through to completion.

2

Bibliography of the Works of Wilferd Madelung

Farhad Daftary

Professor Wilferd Ferdinand Madelung was born on 26 December 1930 in Stuttgart, where he completed his early education at Eberhard Ludwig Gymnasium. After World War II, the young Wilferd accompanied his parents to the United States where his father Georg continued his career as an expert in aeronautics, like a number of other German scientists who had then immigrated to America. Soon afterwards, Madelung enrolled at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. for a while before going to Egypt in 1951. He studied for three years at Cairo University, and received his Bachelor's degree in Arabic literature and Islamic history in 1953. In Cairo, where he acquired a solid grounding in classical Arabic, Madelung was a student of the eminent Egyptian scholar Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn (1901–1961), who edited numerous Ismaili texts of the Fatimid period in his well-known *Silsilat Makhṭūṭāt al-Fāṭimiyyīn* series of publications. It was Professor Kāmil Ḥusayn who originally kindled Madelung's interest in Fatimid history and Ismaili studies, subjects which provided the focus of his doctoral thesis written under the supervision of the late Professor Bertold Spuler at the University of Hamburg,

from which he received his Ph.D. in Islamic history in 1957. Madelung's initial publications, dealing with early Ismaili doctrines and relations between the Fatimids and the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn, were based on his doctoral thesis. These two long articles in German, published in *Der Islam* in 1959 and 1961 respectively, which at the time represented original contributions to modern Ismaili studies, have now acquired the status of classical treatments of their subject matters. Subsequently, Madelung retained his interest in this field of enquiry with many more contributions, including his entries 'Ismāʿīliyya' and 'Ḳarmaṭī' in the new edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

After a brief period of diplomatic service (1958–60) as the Cultural Attaché at the West German Embassy in Baghdad, Madelung's long and distinguished career in Islamic studies followed. In 1963, he started as Visiting Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, and then joined the faculty of the University of Chicago where he taught for fourteen years as Assistant Professor (1964–65), Associate Professor (1966–68) and, finally, as Professor of Islamic History from 1969 until 1978 when he became the Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St John's College there. He held this most prestigious of Islamic chairs in Europe until his retirement from Oxford and its Institute of Oriental Studies in 1998. Since 1999, Professor Madelung has been affiliated to The Institute of Ismaili Studies as a Senior Research Fellow. In the course of his career, Madelung has received numerous honours and has also taught as Visiting Professor at many academic institutions such as The American University in Beirut and the University of Toronto. His standing in the field has received recognition in his election as Fellow of the British Academy.

This is not the place to evaluate the impressive body of work produced so far by my mentor and friend Professor Madelung, whom I wish continued productivity in his chosen fields of enquiry, all of which he has already graced with remarkable distinction. With some 15 books and edited volumes, 60 articles in learned journals and chapters in collective volumes, 130 encyclopaedia entries and more than 160 book reviews, Madelung has

been extremely prolific. The quality and originality of his publications are, however, no less impressive. It suffices to say that he has made major contributions to many aspects of medieval Islamic history and thought, with particular reference to religious schools and movements in early Islam. Indeed, his studies, based on a vast array of primary sources, have enriched our understanding of almost every major Islamic movement, school or sect – not only early Imāmī Shiʿism and the later Twelver, Ismaili and Zaydi branches of Shiʿism but also the lesser known aspects of Sunnism, Khārijism and the Muʿtazila, among others. The two Variorum volumes of his collected studies, published in 1985 and 1992, contain the bulk of his scattered writings on such theological subjects, which also find expression in his *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (1988).

In terms of his knowledge of the sources and the meticulousness with which he handles the details, Madelung's scholarship in Islamic studies is unrivalled in modern times. Not only has he produced studies based on hitherto little-known sources, such as his work on the medieval minor dynasties of northern Iran, published in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Volume 4 (1975) and elsewhere, but he has also proposed new interpretations of controversial aspects of early Islamic history; his *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (1997), which represents a lifetime of research and received the best book of the year award from the Iranian government, being the prime example. It is no exaggeration to state that rarely has any contemporary Islamicist made as many original contributions as Madelung to such a diversity of areas within the field of Islamic studies.

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Part 1

The Transmission of Knowledge

3

Universities: Past and Present

George Makdisi

Origins

The university, a product of medieval Western Christendom, has spanned the length of eight and a half centuries, from the middle of the 12th to the beginning of the 21st and the new millennium. It is the first institution of its kind in history. Before the universities of Bologna and Paris, models for those succeeding them, there was no higher learning in Western civilization, organized into a professional institution on a permanent basis: no colleges or universities, no fixed curriculum or examinations, no doctorate or other degrees.[1]

There is a tendency among historians to look to ancient Greece and Rome for the antecedents of Western civilization – a natural tendency, since the legacy of classical antiquity to Western civilization is enormous. But classical antiquity had neither the university, nor any other type of professional institution of higher learning, organized on a permanent professional basis. Greece and Rome did have higher learning in philosophy and science, rhetoric and law, but they had no professionalized institutions organized for them in perpetuity.

C.H. Haskins writes about the influx of Arabic books that came

through Spain and Sicily,[2] chiefly books on philosophy, science and mathematics. But the three superior faculties, distinguishing the university from the preceding cathedral schools, were the faculties of law, theology and medicine, not faculties of philosophy, science and mathematics. The influx of books can explain the intellectual awakening of the Christian West, not the origin of the university.

There is also a natural tendency to see, in the German university, the origins of 'academic freedom,' the term is a translation of the German *akademische Freiheit*, and of the terms *Lehrfreiheit*, freedom to teach, and *Lernfreiheit*, freedom to learn. But the German university is a latecomer in the rise of institutions of higher learning, whether university or college, and academic freedom was already one of their original components. The notion of these freedoms existed long before the terms for them were coined. Such was also the case with the terms regarding other phenomena of intellectual culture in the Middle Ages: humanism and scholasticism.

There is hardly an informed study on the university that does not puzzle over its origins. Adequate answers have not been obtainable from the Western sources of medieval history, in spite of the excellent studies of a host of scholars: Heinrich Denifle and Hastings Rashdall on medieval universities, C.H. Haskins on medieval science and culture, and recently, A.B. Cobban, and others. If the origins have continued to elude the research efforts of historians, it is because the origins are not to be found in the medieval Christian West, but rather in the classical period of the Islamic East.

Highly noteworthy, however, are the conclusions of Denifle and Rashdall on the origin of universities, as pointed out by the editors of Rashdall's fundamental work. Denifle's conclusions, accepted by Rashdall, tend to emphasize the importance of the *licentia docendi* and to strengthen the connection between the universities and ecclesiastical authorities.[3] The reason why these two factors, the license to teach and ecclesiastical authority, relate to the origins of the guilds of higher learning is amply illustrated in the classical Islamic experience.

Historians of medieval universities, failing to discover the antecedents, have resorted to the notion that the medieval phenomenon of organized higher learning was the result of a spontaneous development. Cobban, after stating that it was a 'natural and spontaneous development,' goes on to state that 'there does not appear to be any organic continuity between the universities which evolved towards the end of the twelfth century and Greek, Graeco-Roman, Byzantine or Arabic schools.'[4]

That the author should consider the 'Arabic schools' is a distinct improvement over many previous writers who ignore them altogether, and is evidence of an attempt to include all the higher civilizations that could be candidates for this phenomenon. If the 'Arabic schools' could not be seen as the antecedents of the university, it is because the intellectual culture of classical Islam and its institutions have been an underdeveloped field of study. A conclusion similar to that of Cobban was arrived at by the editors of Rashdall's fundamental work.[5] With all the possible candidates eliminated as antecedents, Cobban could feel justified, given the limits of Eurocentric historiography, to begin his chapter on the 'concept of a university' as follows: 'The medieval university was essentially an indigenous product of Western Europe.'[6]

The author was right in excluding the schools of classical antiquity and those of Byzantium. However, the 'Arabic schools' cannot easily be excluded. For the professional organization of higher learning, as embodied in the earliest universities of Bologna and Paris, has it antecedents in classical Islam. They both originated as scholastic guilds, the antecedents of which can be found only in classical Islam. The scholastic guild, this unique institutional structure, with its scholastic method leading to the license to teach and its academic freedom, was a creation of classical Islam. Its origin dates back to the ninth century in Baghdad, cultural centre of the world of classical Islam. It is in this city of the Abbasids that the motive for such an institution came into being. The motive did not come from philosophy and science, but rather from religion and law. It was theistic religious law, in its clash with non-theistic philosophy, that gave the impetus to the development of institutionalized higher learning, with its

autonomy and monopoly, as a defence against the governing power's support of philosophy's inroads into religion.

Scholastic Guild and Doctorate

Two elements explain the permanence and professionalism of organized institutions of higher learning: (1) a social form of organization, the scholastic guild; and (2) a professional license to teach, the doctorate. These two components, originating in Eastern Islam, found their way to Western Islam and to Western Christendom and Christianity. There is no known direct evidence of the dependence of the later development on the earlier one. As in a good deal of history, the available evidence is indirect.

The link between the earlier Eastern and the later Western developments is based on three considerations: (1) the model of the scholastic guild and its institutions, with all their essential constituent elements: the guild institutions, the constituent elements of the scholastic method (*sic et non*, dialectic, the art of disputation), leading to the license to teach (the doctorate), identical in their essence in the Islamic East and West, and in the Christian West to the exclusion of the Christian East; (2) the license to teach, as a magisterium, an authority to teach, i.e., to define orthodoxy, in effect adding an intrusive second magisterium in the Christian Church, rivalling with the millennial ecclesiastical magisterium based on the apostolic succession, again an intrusive Islamic phenomenon in Western, to the exclusion of Eastern, Christianity; and (3) the *raison d'être* of this revolution in higher learning, the motive which brought it into existence, is to be found in the Islamic East and not in the Christian West.

Thus, the link between East and West is based on the principle of sufficient evidence. The reason why so many pieces of evidence[7] all converge on this linkage means that it is objectively true. The development of the Islamic movement, from beginning to full bloom, required a period of over two centuries, from the early 3rd/9th to the middle of the 5th/11th.[8] This period includes the crisis that brought the guild of higher learning into existence, and the time it took to develop a permanent solution to it. If, in

the Christian West, the process took less time to come to full bloom, it is because the Islamic model had already been created. The two phenomena, license and magisterium, followed a development in three stages common to both movements, first in Eastern Islam, then in the Christian West: (1) both began with a translation movement of foreign books, mainly Greek books in Eastern Islam, translated into Arabic, and Arabic books in the Christian West, translated into Latin; (2) both began guild institutions of higher learning, colleges in Eastern Islam, colleges and universities in the Christian West; (3) both established one and the same scholastic method of disputation for teaching and writing, with the same set of basic technical terms, identical in form and content, and leading to the same professional license to teach, the doctorate.

In the early 3rd/9th century, the translation movement, begun under the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd in Baghdad, proceeded in earnest under his son al-Ma'mūn. Famous translators undertook the work in al-Ma'mūn's Bayt al-Ḥikma, 'House of Wisdom,' among whom were Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and his son, and Thābit b. Qurra and his descendants. In the West, the famous centres of translation from Arabic to Latin were located in Italy and Spain. The movement of translation began in earnest with Constantine the African, said to be a Muslim merchant who became a physician and Christian monk, and translated Arabic books into Latin at Monte Cassino in Italy. Another centre was later established in Toledo, in Spain, where the prolific Gerard of Cremona worked as translator, as did also Michael Scot, the astrologer of Frederick II, among others.

Note that it was not these translation centres, whether in Baghdad, Monte Cassino or Toledo, that developed into the guild institutions of higher learning. It was not the type of centre created by al-Ma'mūn, his 'House of Wisdom,' or the 'House of Science' of other patrons. These houses were library-centres where books were kept, consulted and discussed. They were not the autonomous privately endowed institutions where the degree of doctor was prepared for and granted. Such institutions had not yet come into existence: the crisis creating them was yet to come

and the library-centres belonged to the forces that brought on the crisis.

Pre-College Institutions of Learning

Two sets of schools preceded the guild colleges in Islam, one religious, the other governmental. The religious schools were the *maktab*, the *kuttāb* and the mosques (the small *masjid* and the great *jāmiʿ*), where the religious studies and literary arts were taught. The literary arts were also taught in the chancery schools to the neophytes of government administration, in work-study programmes, or taught by private tutors, or acquired through self-teaching. Before the advent of the guild colleges, Islam thus had its *maktab* and *kuttāb*, its mosques and chancery schools, while the Christian West had its own variety, the most important being the cathedral schools. The advent of the scholastic guilds revolutionized higher learning, by adding the college to Islamic education, and college and university to education in the Christian West. In classical Islam, the colleges replaced the library-centres; and in the Christian West, colleges and universities eventually meant the demise of cathedral schools as centres of higher learning.

In Islam, the guild college was developed from a pre-existing institution, the *masjid* type of mosque, founded in great numbers in the various quarters of the city. This was accomplished simply by adding an inn next to the mosque, to provide lodgings for the students who came to study there from out-of-town. The mosque-inn complex, in turn, served as the model for the second type of college, namely the *madrasa*. The *madrasa* college had the same educational purpose as its model, which continued to be founded after the *madrasa*. On the other hand, the 'House of Wisdom' type of institution ceased to exist after the middle of the eleventh century, the very century in which the *madrasa* flourished. The books on the 'ancient sciences,' heretofore kept in the 'Houses of Wisdom,' continued to be acquired and preserved in the libraries of the new colleges, as objects of the charitable trust (*waqf*); they could not be deliberately destroyed, sold, or otherwise

disposed of. In the place of *dār al-ḥikma*, the 'house of wisdom' and *dār al-ʿilm*, the 'house of learning,' other colleges were added from the 6th/12th century on; first, the *dār al-ḥadīth*, the 'house of Prophetic Traditions,' then *dār al-Qurʾān*, the 'house of the Qur'an,' as though to signal the demise of their non-theistic namesakes by mimicking their names. The institutions of the 'ancient sciences' thus gave way to those of the sacred scriptures. These new guild institutions flourished alongside the old privately endowed institutions, and replaced the institutions of non-theism.

Government and Institutionalized Higher Learning

The professional legal guilds produced permanent institutions of higher learning in the form of privately endowed colleges, financially independent and fully autonomous, with a monopoly on orthodox religious learning. The governing power did not create the college. The legal guilds brought the colleges into existence as bulwarks against government interference. The law of the charitable trust allowed only the private person to found colleges, not the governing power: *waqf*, the charitable trust, was the prerogative of the Muslim individual alone. Founded by private initiative for a public purpose, the college could legally be restricted by its founder to whichever segment of society he chose. The Niẓāmiyya College, an institution of the Shāfiʿī legal guild, was not a 'state' institution of the Saljūq governing power, as the textbooks would have it. Children of the Ḥanafī Saljūq sultans, for instance, could not attend it unless they transferred from the Ḥanafī legal guild to the Shāfiʿī. The Shrine College of Abū Ḥanīfa, founded in the same year as the Niẓāmiyya College, was the Ḥanafī College to which the Ḥanafī sultans could send their sons.

The difference between the two types of colleges, the *masjid*-inn and the *madrasa*, consisted in the relationship of the founder to his foundation. Though the college was privately endowed, the *madrasa* type of college, unlike the *masjid* type, allowed the founder freely to hire and fire the teaching and administrative staff, indeed even to hire himself as the head professor and administrator of his own foundation. The *madrasa* type of college thus gave such

patrons as Niẓām al-Mulk the right to make his own appointments and thus exercise patronage for political advantage. From the very beginning of the guilds of higher learning which they unwittingly provoked into being, governments sought to exercise control over them, and succeeded to a greater or lesser degree, for better or for worse, through the centuries down to the present day.

The Historical Background

Early in the 3rd/9th century, under a strong Abbasid caliphate, government interference in the affairs of religion brought on a reaction from the Traditionalists undertaken in defence of 'orthodoxy.' To this reaction are due the rise of the scholastic guild, the college and the license to teach.

The struggle was one between two opposing theological movements, one philosophical, the other juridical, each aiming to establish its own theology as the 'orthodoxy' of Islam. In support of the rationalist philosophical theologians, Caliph al-Ma'mūn gave orders to begin an inquisition, called *miḥna*, against the Traditionalist juridical theologians. These intellectuals were required to answer, in the affirmative, the question whether the Qur'an was the created word of God. The Traditionalists believed this sacred scripture of Islam to be the co-eternal word of God. After fifteen years and four caliphal administrations, the Inquisition failed to subdue the stubborn passive resistance of the Traditionalist movement. The fourth caliph of the Inquisition, al-Mutawakkil, in the second year of his accession, shifted caliphal support from the rationalist philosophical theologians to the Traditionalist juridical theologians. Wary, nevertheless, of government interference, and consumed by the desire of excluding all interference from government and its collaborators, the Traditionalists organized themselves into guilds of law and created two new institutions: the college and the license to teach, i.e., the doctorate. The guild of law gave the jurisconsults autonomy; the college, with its scholastic method and its license, gave them the monopoly of determining orthodoxy in Islam, the sole authority freely to teach orthodoxy with academic freedom.

Any Muslim wishing to become a juridical theologian had to obtain the degree of doctor; and for this, he had to pass through the system of education dispensed solely by members of the guilds of the religious law. This system of education included a programme of religious studies and auxiliary literary arts. It included a method of teaching based on disputation, argumentation and debate, raised to an art through dialectic, called 'the method of disputation' (*ṭarīqat al-naẓar*). This method was later to be dubbed, in the Christian West, the 'scholastic method.' It prepared the doctoral candidates for examinations and the defence of theses, leading to the doctorate. Excluded from the curriculum were the 'ancient sciences,' especially philosophy, along with the Islamic philosophical theology of *kalām*. The rationalist religious intellectuals did not disappear; they joined the winning side and, without relinquishing their philosophical theology, became juridical theologians.

In the college movement of the Christian West, there are some interesting developments that parallel those of the Islamic East. The guild, for instance, was always unincorporated in Islam and began as such in the Christian West, becoming incorporated only later. For instance, Merton College at Oxford began as an unincorporated guild institution; it was not incorporated until ten years after its foundation, after which it became the model for other colleges in the West. Sometime before Merton College, church-inn colleges of law were established in London modelled on the mosque-inn colleges of law in Islam. The church-inn colleges, along with the Inns of Chancery and the Sergeants' Inns, have disappeared; but London still has its unincorporated legal guilds: the four Inns of Court, colleges of law that still train lawyers. And these English colleges of law, like their earlier antecedents in Islam, have survived as the only unincorporated guild institutions of the Islamic type, at a time when no other such guilds remain anywhere in Europe. Classical Islam never developed the incorporated guild, and therefore never the university; the reason being that the corporation is based on fictitious legal personality, and classical Islamic law recognized personality only for the natural, physical person.

The governing power in classical Islam was interested in harnessing the forces represented by the intellectuals, who acted as intermediaries between it and the masses. A basic ingredient of politics being expediency, the governing power shifted its support from one side to the other, when it realized that popular support was on the side of the jurisconsult-theologians. These religious intellectuals drew their strength from the support of the people, who regarded them as guardians of the faith of the 'pious fathers,' the *salaf*. Caliph al-Mutawakkil's shift of support was not inspired by pious religious sentiment, but rather by political realism interested in the stability of his realm. Islamic law became juridical theology, the supreme subject of Islam's higher learning, while philosophical theology (*kalām*) was excluded from the curriculum. All over the Muslim world colleges were founded to teach Islamic law, with the scholastic method and its disputed questions, with dialectic and its art of disputation, leading to the doctorate.

Al-Mutawakkil's reversal of al-Ma'mūn's policy foretold the future of relations between the guilds of higher learning and the governing powers. Examples of these relations may be seen in the following developments. Bajkam the Turk, who held the title of *amīr al-umarā'*, precursor of *sulṭān*, realized the importance of the religious intellectuals when he stated that he would have them all indebted to his largesse. Governor Badr b. Ḥasanawayh is reported to have founded 3,000 colleges of law, of the mosque-inn type, during his thirty years tenure over nine provinces in the eastern caliphate. Niẓām al-Mulk is said to have founded, in addition to the Niẓāmiyya College of Baghdad, a Niẓāmiyya college of law in each of the great cities of eastern Islam. He founded them for jurisconsults, whether of the Traditionalist or Rationalist camp, the rationalists having succeeded in getting themselves accepted as jurisconsults in the legal guild movement. The governing power had its own interests to foster and to protect in both religious camps.

Men of power and influence preferred to found *madrasa* colleges rather than mosque-inn colleges. They had a measure of control in the former, not in the latter. The mosque-college was

characterized as a *waqf taḥrīr*, an 'emancipated charitable trust.' It was likened to a slave emancipated by his master. The founder of the *madrasa* had a measure of control through hiring and firing the teaching and administrative staff, and the determination of their salaries. He could hire himself as head-professor or administrator of his own *madrasa*, or both. This was the law of *waqf* for three of the legal guilds, but not for the Mālikī guild. In North Africa and Spain, Mālikī law discouraged the founding of the *madrasa* type of college by making no distinction between the *madrasa* and the mosque-inn. The founder of either relinquished control over the institution. This left the founding of *madrasa*s to the sovereigns, in their capacity as private Muslim individuals. Having no need to benefit financially from their foundations, they nevertheless stood to benefit from the prestige of having colleges in the lands under their sway. It is this element in the Mālikī law of the charitable trust that appears to have had an influence on the foundation of the University of Valencia in Spain and the University of Naples in Italy. In contradistinction to all previous universities in the Christian West, these two were founded by sovereigns, Alfonso VIII and Frederick II respectively, rather than by the free association of professors (Paris) or students (Bologna).

Two Intellectual Movements

The professionalized higher learning of classical Islam was based on two traditions of learning: humanism and scholasticism which happen to be also the two basic traditions of modern Western higher learning. In Islam, the humanistic movement was the first to develop, followed by the scholastic one. Professionalized higher learning was the achievement of scholasticism; humanism was propadeutic to scholasticism and later became incorporated into scholasticism's guild system of higher learning. It was part of the curriculum as the bearer of the literary arts. It was never the recipient of the doctorate, strictly a religious magisterium. Humanism and scholasticism in Islam had this in common: they shared the same set of material sources, the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, the Prophetic Traditions and sacred scriptures written in classical

Arabic. Humanism was closely allied to scholasticism through its art of the notary, the substance of which was law, and the form, eloquence in composition. I have written elsewhere on the crises relative to the sacred scriptures, which brought these two movements into existence. Scholasticism and humanism still inform the institutions and intellectual culture of higher learning in our universities.

With these new professional institutions, the Traditionalists found their solution to the problem of government interference as of the latter part of the 3rd/9th century. But as the governing power's interest in the intellectuals was to secure them within its orbit, the guild institutions which had managed to keep their autonomy until the second half of the 8th/14th century, finally succumbed to government dominance in the second half of that century. The governing power succeeded in emasculating the scholastic guild movement by destroying the academic freedom of the doctors of law. It secured them within its orbit by salarying the mufti-doctors as its employees. With academic freedom snuffed out of existence and the guild movement emasculated, the final blow was dealt to classical Islamic civilization which had already received its fatal blow from the Mongol invasion in the 7th/13th century. After this coup de grace in the latter part of the 8th/14th century, there came a slow, but steady, decline.

The 'Three Powers' of the Middle Ages: Sacerdotium, Imperium, Studium

The influence of classical antiquity on Western civilization is so preponderant and pervasive that it is indelibly embedded in Western consciousness, so much so that it leaves little room for consideration of influence from other civilizations. For instance, as early as the Carolingian age, a myth was created, referred to as the *translatio studii*, according to which learning was supposed to have passed from Athens to Rome, from Rome to Byzantium, and from Byzantium to Paris. This was long before the rise of colleges and universities in the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries. In the second half of the 7th/13th century, a German writer gave

expression to a tripartite structure of powers which, far from being mythical, was based on historical reality. He referred to the three powers as *Sacerdotium*, *Imperium*, *Studium*:

> *Hiis siquidem tribus, scilicet sacerdotio imperio et studio, tamquam tribus virtutibus, ... sancta ecclesia catholica spiritualiter vivificatur augmentatur et regitur.*
>
> ('By these three, namely priesthood, empire and university [*studium*, literally, learned institution], the Holy Catholic Church is spiritually given life, increased and governed as by three virtues....').[9]

Historians have long recognized the notion of the *translatio studii* as being a myth, but that of the three powers has rightly been taken seriously. Rashdall uses it to justify his history of medieval universities, which he believed to deserve the attention usually given only to the history of the two other powers, the Church and the Empire. Here is how he puts it:

> *Sacerdotium*, *Imperium*, *Studium* are brought together by a medieval writer as the three mysterious powers or 'virtues,' by whose harmonious co-operation the life and health of Christendom are sustained. This 'Studium' did not to him, any more than the 'Sacerdotium' or the 'Imperium' with which it is associated, represent a mere abstraction. As all priestly power had its visible head and source in the city of the Seven Hills, as all secular authority was ultimately held of the Holy Roman Empire, so could all the streams of knowledge by which the Universal Church was watered and fertilized, be ultimately traced as to their fountain-head to the great universities, especially to the University of Paris. The history of an institution which held such a place in the imagination of a medieval scholar is no mere subject of antiquarian curiosity; its origin, its development, its decay, or rather the transition to its modern form, are worthy of the same serious investigation which has been abundantly bestowed upon the Papacy and Empire.[10]

The power of the university, especially the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, remained a mystery to Rashdall who wrote at the end of the 19th century. But it was not a mystery to

Alexander of Roes in 1281, nor to St Thomas Aquinas, as we shall see presently.

Rashdall goes on to say that 'ideals pass into great historic forces by embodying themselves in institutions,' and that 'the power of embodying its ideals in institutions was the peculiar genius of the medieval mind....'[11]

Three powers became historical realities in classical Islam for the first time, in the second half of the 3rd/9th century; and later, in the second half of the 7th/13th century, for the first time in the Christian West. In Islam, the Prophet exercised all three powers. Following his death, they were invested in the first four caliphs, called 'The Rightly-Guided Caliphs' (*al-khulafā' ar-rāshidūn*), later considered as part of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*: 'the pious predecessors,' or 'fathers of the church.'

On the other hand, the Umayyad caliphs, the first dynasty of Islam, were perceived solely as kings, and therefore representing solely the *Imperium*. They were considered to have little or no concern for religion or religious learning (*Sacerdotium* and *Studium*). With the Abbasids, the perception remained the same, although the new dynasty of caliphs wished to be seen as caring for religion and religious learning. By the early 3rd/9th century, this concern had translated itself into an elitist concern for philosophical theology (*kalām*), which brought on a religious crisis, an inquisition, ending in the first half of the century, with the political demise of its rationalist perpetrators and the triumph of its traditionalist victims. Henceforth, *Sacerdotium* and *Studium* were represented in the traditionalist juridical theologians. *Imperium*, still embodied in the institution of the caliphate, became a century later divided between caliph and sultan (*sulṭān*: power, man of power; a development from *amīr al-umarā'*: commander of commanders), the former retaining a religiously based authority, with the right of investiture; the latter, arrogating to himself a power based on the actual military forces he was able to muster. The sultan's was often a shaky power with less than adequate forces, which the caliph could manipulate to his own advantage, by playing the seekers of power waiting on the sidelines against one another.

Such was the situation of the 'three powers' in Islam which

began eleven centuries ago. If Alexander of Roes could, in about the year 1281, see in the *Studium* one of three powers, it is because of the *licentia docendi*, the license to teach, which developed into a magisterium, an authority to teach orthodoxy. It rivalled that of the Church, invested in the pope in union with the bishops, a primordial pastoral magisterium instituted by Christ. In classical Islam, it was the Imperium that became split in two, between caliph and sultan; in Western Christianity, it was the *Sacerdotium*, between pope and bishops, on the one hand, and on the other, the professors of theology at the University of Paris. Such was the situation in Western Christendom by the end of the 7th/13th century.

In the Christian West, although the scholastic guild movement, like its Islamic counterpart, can be said to have lived in an antipathetic symbiosis with government, it has in contrast miraculously survived, though in somewhat shaky equilibrium in Europe, down to the present day. In America, the reason for its survival, at a time when Europe shows disturbing signs of weakness, would seem to be due not only to a government with a separation of powers, but also and especially to private endowments, and historical traditions regarding intellectual freedom and academic freedom, as well as the general attitude of the people traditionally toward government interference. But if history has a lesson to teach in this regard, it is that this unique phenomenon of higher learning, delicate and vulnerable, can cease to function as it should, and be replaced by a crude image of itself, lacking the attributes necessary to perform its true mission.

Some Highlights of American Institutional History

America, in the formative period of its higher education, came close to losing its private institutions. Dartmouth College nearly lost its status as a private college in 1817 when the state of New Hampshire rendered a decision against the college.

The state legislature had enacted legislation to change the college into a state university. Even Thomas Jefferson approved the state's action in a letter sent to the Governor. The state court

rendered a decision against the college. But Daniel Webster, a Dartmouth alumnus, took the case to the Supreme Court. There he cited the case of the *Trustees of the University of North Carolina v. Foy and Bishop*, in which the Supreme Court of North Carolina pronounced unconstitutional and voided a law repealing a grant to the University of North Carolina.

In rendering the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *The Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, Chief Justice John Marshall stated that the New Hampshire Charter of Dartmouth College, a contract within the meaning of that clause of the Constitution of the United States which declares that no state shall make any law impairing the obligation of contracts... that a corporation established for purposes of general charity, or for education generally, does not, *per se*, make it a public corporation, liable to the control of the legislature.[12]

With this legal opinion, Marshall made America a secure home for the future of privately endowed higher learning. By guaranteeing the rights of the incorporated charitable trusts in the United States, he triggered an upsurge of private and religious institutions of higher learning in the land. In 1819, the date of the decision in favour of Dartmouth College, there were 38 private colleges in the country. The decision's effect on subsequent developments is highly significant. In the following decade, the 1820s, 22 such colleges were added; in the 1830s, 38; in the 1840s, 42; in the 1850s, 92. By the time of the Civil War, there were about 232 private institutions of higher learning. The Supreme Court's decision had another beneficial effect. Now that the states could not absorb their private institutions, they began to establish public institutions of their own. In 1819, the state universities of Virginia and Alabama were established; in 1820, those of Indiana and Tennessee; in 1821, the state university of North Carolina. And after the civil war, the land grant colleges boosted considerably the number of state institutions of higher learning. It is, moreover, interesting to note that the state institutions have generally modelled themselves on the private institutions. More interesting still is the fact that, although state institutions, these universities have important private endowments, like those of their

sister private universities, which are beyond the reach of political control.

The Islamic movement of higher learning changed in character when the jurisconsults (*muftī*s), doctors of the law, products of the college system, were salaried by the government. This began when the governing power created the 'Palace of Justice' in Damascus in the second half of the 8th/14th century.[13] The Muslim faithful could now solicit the opinions of the doctors without having to pay for them. The doctors who chose to resist the government eventually faded from the scene, having lost their monopoly and source of income. The guild movement of higher learning could succeed only when its members kept a firm grip on their autonomy and academic freedom. The destruction of the movement by external forces could only come with cooperation from within, and so it did in Islam. In the modern West, the danger lurks in contracts from government and industry, in awards which tend to cause the activities of the doctors to move in directions contrary to the spirit of free inquiry and publication.

Religion and Higher Learning

In our time there is the problem of the academic freedom of professors of theology in Catholic universities. As a historian, my sole interest in treating this contemporary problem in our Catholic universities is to identify the license to teach, i.e., the doctorate, as an abnormal antecedent in the religious history of the university, an intrusive element disturbing the equilibrium of the authority to teach, the magisterium in medieval Christianity. This intrusive element dates back to the professors of theology at the University of Paris in the 7th/13th century, illustrated in the structure of the General Council of Basel in 1431, and carried to its logical limit with Martin Luther as doctor of theology in the 10th/16th century, before it comes up again with present-day Catholic professors holding chairs of sacred theology.

The primordial function of the license to teach, the doctorate, was a religious one, indispensable for the monopoly on the authority for the exclusive orthodox teaching of the guilds of higher

learning. The German Dominican scholar, Heinrich Denifle, was right in his conclusions on the rise of universities, in which he emphasizes the importance of the *licentia docendi* at the university's origin; and Rashdall was right in accepting Denifle's conclusions. This license, at its origins in classical Islam, had a double function: first, that of teaching Islamic Traditionalist theology and forming the future doctors of that theology; secondly, that of issuing authoritative theological opinions to the Muslim faithful soliciting them. The two-fold function was secured by a double license: one based on the doctor's competence to teach in the guild colleges; and a second, based on his jurisdictional authority for the determination of orthodoxy in the opinions he issued to the faithful. The Arabic title of this license made this double function explicit. These professional teachers in Islam had a triple designation, as their later counterparts did in the Christian West: doctor (*mudarris*), master (*faqīh*) and professor (*muftī*).

The doctorate in the Christian West explicitly cites only the function of teaching, not that of issuing legal (religious) opinions, since the councils and synods obviated the need for such opinions. Indeed, only the first part of the two-fold Arabic term, the 'license to teach,' was usually cited; the second part, the 'license to issue legal opinions' being understood also as a teaching function. The crisis in Christianity arose when the doctors in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, composed of the greatest theologians of Christendom, began to profess their own religious opinions. From a function limited at first to their competence to teach theology, they gradually assumed the second function of the doctorate, the jurisdiction to determine orthodoxy through their professed theological opinions. With this second function, properly belonging to the Muslim *muftī*, the Church now had two such jurisdictions, which were to become rivals.

Since the advent of Christianity, only one jurisdiction had existed in the Church, when Christ endowed his disciples with the authority to teach the faithful. This pastoral authority passed on to the pope, in union with the bishops, in apostolic succession. At the outset, both Christianity and Islam had but one jurisdictional authority to teach, one magisterium. The Apostles of Christ and

their successors, and the Apostles of the Prophet Muḥammad and their successors, had but one kind of authority to teach. Neither in Islam nor in Christianity had this teaching authority, this magisterium, consisted in anything but a pastoral authority to teach, one based on the faith and its transmission down through the ages. However, with the advent of the Islamic guilds of higher learning, a second type of magisterium came into being: next to the pastor's magisterium there now was the master's magisterium. It is St Thomas Aquinas who so identifies these two magisteria in the 7th/13th century as the *magisterium cathedrae pastoralis* or *pontificalis*, and the *magisterium cathedrae magistralis*.[14] In Islam both magisteriums came to reside in the same person, the doctor of the guild of law. In the Christian West, on the other hand, authority to teach came to reside in two different persons, the pastor (pope, bishops) and the doctoral master (professor of theology), creating a potentially explosive situation.

At the outset, Western Christianity proceeded with this intrusive element without apparent mishap. The opinions of the theologians at the University of Paris, arrived at in conference, were solicited and approved by pope and bishops, in recognition of the excellence of that great centre of theological learning in the West, where France was recognized as the 'Fille ainée de l'Eglise.' The crisis did not come until the beginning of the 10th/16th century with the Reformation. But the seeds of dissent had already been sown in the 7th/13th century, when the doctorate, taking on the two-fold Islamic characteristic, developed into a two-fold magisterium. As long as the professorial magisterium was understood as seconding that of the pastor or pontiff, as long as the doctors of theology recognized the primacy of the pontiff's magisterium and worked as advisers in support of the pastor, the relationship worked smoothly. Matters proceeded in this fashion until the Reformation, when the governing powers, following their own perceived interests, involved themselves in the controversy and brought on the dividing of Christendom in the West.

In sum, religion is at the origin of organized professional learning. The religious guilds of higher learning saw their sacred mission as consisting in the safeguarding of orthodoxy against

two hostile forces: government interference and unorthodox tampering with religion. To counter them, it sought to achieve autonomy and monopoly: freedom from the governing power and sole authority to determine orthodoxy. Considering the genesis of the guild of higher learning, it is not surprising that the university appears as something of a sacerdocy, a priestly or monastic order in which its members, the professors, leading scholarly lives, have solemnly chosen to dedicate themselves to the high oral purpose of searching for the truth, ever the orthodoxy of true higher learning. Truth, and law with morality, are ideals of the two intellectual movements, scholasticism and humanism, that have remained the two stalwart pillars supporting the edifice of higher learning. These two concepts, to which all true higher learning aspires, are perpetuated as ideals in the mottos of two of America's oldest institutions, Harvard University's *Veritas* and the University of Pennsylvania's *Leges sine moribus vanae*.

Notes

1. This article, based on a lecture given at the University of Pennsylvania in 1990, on the occasion of the celebration of the University's 250th anniversary, was originally submitted that year for publication. This delay sufficiently justifies its withdrawal and publication here.

2. C.H. Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (Ithaca, NY, 1923).

3. See H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden (Oxford, 1936), vol.1, p.20.

4. A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization* (London, 1975), p.22.

5. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, p.3 n.1.

6. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, p.21.

7. For a list of this evidence, see my *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1981), pp.287–288.

8. For the historical background of the scholastic movement, see below, p.12, and my *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.2–45.

9. Translation (slightly modified) in G. Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: An Institutional and Intellectual History* (New York, 1968), p.3 (bracketed words added); Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, p.22.

10. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, pp.2–3.
11. Ibid., p.3.
12. U.S. Reports, 17 (Wheaton 5).
13. See Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, p.199 n.242.
14. See Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*, p.34 n.70.

4

The *ijāza* from ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhījī to Nāṣir al-Jārūdī al-Qaṭīfī: A Source for the Twelver Shiʿi Scholarly Tradition of Baḥrayn

Sabine Schmidtke

There are numerous types of evidence that give us information about the ways and means of transmitting knowledge and scholarship in the Islamic world.* These include notes attesting that someone has studied with a teacher either as an auditor or by reading a text to him, colophons by an author or a scribe, collation notes, or ownership statements. These typically appear in connection with a concrete text and may be found at the beginning or end or in the margins of a text. Further classes of texts that give information about the transmission of knowledge are reports about one's own studies that are unconnected with texts, that circulate as *fahrasa*, *mashyakha* (*mashīkha*), *barnāmaj*, *thabat* or *muʿjam*. One of the most variegated types in this category of evidence of transmission of knowledge is the *ijāza*, the 'license to transmit.' The recipient – or recipients (*mujāz*, plural, *mujāzūn*) – of an *ijāza* is authorized by the issuer (*mujīz*) to transmit to others the contents specified in the *ijāza*. These might refer to one or

several works, or to a whole body of works that is either precisely specified or only cursorily hinted at. The dividing line between one type of certificate and another is often blurred. If the authorization to transmit follows instruction of the *mujāz* by the *mujīz*, for example, this is called *ijāzat al-samāʿ* or *ijāzat al-qirāʾa*, according to the kind of instruction. Similarly, the description of the course of one's studies can form part of an *ijāza*.

It appears that what was originally an oral authorization to transmit came increasingly to be documented in writing and formalized in structure and terminology parallel with the growing dominance of the written word and the growing institutionalization of the scholarly culture. Besides the license to transmit that was issued for specified texts, there were 'text-independent' *ijāzāt* that were not tied to specific contents or texts either in their outward appearance or the contents for which the *ijāza* was issued. Because of their generally large scope, such text-independent *ijāzāt* often no longer appeared in the margins or at the beginning or end of other texts, but themselves became autonomous texts, sometimes taking the form of books. The contents authorized to be transmitted were usually comprehensive, frequently comprising the whole literature of a certain scholarly tradition.

It is obvious that these thousands of certificates, which in most cases exist only in manuscript form, are of great value for research. They can be consulted for reconstructing the history of transmission of individual texts and manuscripts, and they also say something about their quality. They contain important biographical and bibliographical data on a multitude of Muslim scholars, and thus serve to reconstruct whole scholarly traditions and networks. Moreover, they provide information about the social aspects of the transmission of knowledge.

Despite numerous studies of the different types of testimonies, we are still far from even an approximately complete picture of their historical development and different forms. In order to get a clearer picture of the historical formation of the *ijāza* – for example, in its various functions and elements, its social value and what it says about the social structure of scholars – it would be

necessary to catalogue all the available materials, to analyse them in a systematic manner, and finally, to devise a typology for them.[1]

The following pages will examine an *ijāza* by ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhījī (1086–1135/1675–1722), a well-known representative of the Akhbāriyya school within Twelver Shiʿism, to Nāṣir al-Jārūdī al-Qaṭīfī (ca. 1095–1164/1684–1751) that was granted on Monday 23 Ṣafar 1128/17 February 1716.[2] This belongs to the type of text-independent *ijāza*; its *matn* covers the entire culture and literature of Imāmī scholars. Both scholars came from Baḥrayn, which, at the time, also included the eastern part of the Arabian peninsula including al-Qaṭīf and al-Aḥsā. Both were students of Sulaymān ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Baḥrānī al-Māḥūzī (1075–1121/1665–1709), with a difference in age of only eight years; at the time of the issue of the *ijāza* al-Samāhījī was 40 years old, and Nāṣir al-Jārūdī about 32.[3]

The *ijāza* consists of the following parts: (i) opening prayer and introduction (pp.49–51); (ii) main section of the *ijāza*, with references to the contents and the extent of the license to transmit (pp.51–276); (iii) end of the *ijāza*, with a reference to the conditions of the license, and colophon (pp.276–277).

The short prayer at the beginning of the text (p.49) is followed by the introduction (pp.49–51), providing information on the persons issuing and receiving the *ijāza*. Al-Samāhījī's statements about the *mujāz* indicate a cordial relationship between him and Nāṣir al-Jārūdī, of whom he obviously thought highly for his erudite knowledge and noble character. This acknowledged equality is further suggested by al-Samāhījī's remark that he himself had previously asked for and received an *ijāza* from Nāṣir al-Jārūdī (p.49).[4] Al-Samāhījī then explains in detail that al-Jārūdī studied with him after his move from al-Qaṭīf to Baḥrayn and names the following works in this connection: three of the four canonical *ḥadīth* works of the Imāmīyya, namely Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī's (d.329/941) *al-Kāfī,* Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī's (d.460/1067) *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and his *Istibṣār*; two of al-Samāhījī's own works, namely *Jawāhir al-Baḥrayn fī aḥkām al-thaqalayn* and *Maṣā'ib al-shuhadā' wa-manāqib al-suʿadā'*, a portion of the biographical work *Manhaj al-maqāl fī taḥqīq aḥwāl al-rijāl* of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-

Astarābādī (d.1028/1618–19), a portion of the legal work *Sharā'iʿ al-Islām fi masā'il al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām* of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d.676/1278), and the two commentaries on this work by Muḥammad b. Abi'l-Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-ʿĀmilī (d.1009/1600–01) and al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d.966/1558); and further, two legal works of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d.726/1325), *Irshād al-adhhān ilā aḥkām al-īmān* and *Mukhtalaf al-Shīʿa fi aḥkām al-sharīʿa*, as well as al-Samāhījī's *Kitāb al-khuṭab*, a compendium of sermons he had delivered on various occasions. It appears that the instruction which al-Jārūdī received from al-Samāhījī continued over several years, and that it also covered writings and disciplines in addition to those mentioned.[5] The esteem of al-Samāhījī for al-Jārūdī and his erudition and the fact that the latter had earlier granted an *ijāza* to him indicate that the document under discussion must be considered an 'honorary' *ijāza* (*ijāza mudabbaja*). This term is used when two equal and usually reputed scholars grant each other the right to transmit.[6]

In the introduction, al-Samāhījī also addresses the issue of the functions of the *ijāza*. By contrast to other scholars, who include within such documents theoretical elaborations concerning the function of *ijāzāt* – as in the case of Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Qaṭīfī (d. after 945/1539) in his various *ijāzāt*,[7] or ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī (d.1173/1759–60) in his *ijāza al-kabīra*[8] – al-Samāhījī deals neither in the introduction of the document nor elsewhere in the text with the theoretical issue of the function of an *ijāza* or other matters related to its issuance. Al-Samāhījī indicates, however, the reasons for al-Jārūdī's request to receive an *ijāza*. These reasons give us some idea of the functional aspect of the *ijāza*.

According to al-Samāhījī, al-Jārūdī first asked him to issue a permit of transmission for all those subject matters he himself had been authorized by his shaykhs to transmit, as well as for everything written by al-Samāhījī himself. This would connect the chain of transmission back to the Imams.[9] Thus, the first function of an *ijāza* is to link later generations of scholars to the Prophet and the Imams by attributing to the *mujāz*, the recipient of an *ijāza*, a place in this chain of transmitters. Generally, blessings are attributed to the practice of that pious usage.[10]

Al-Samāhījī goes on to say that al-Jārūdī asked him to enumerate all the ways of transmission (*ṭuruq*) and writings (*kutub*) known to him.[11] This request for documentation of the scholarly tradition points to the essential function of the comprehensive, text-independent *ijāzāt* similar to that in biographical works. In many cases these two genres cannot be clearly distinguished from one another. Twelver Shiʿi examples from the 12th/18th century are the already-mentioned *al-Ijāza al-kabīra* of ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī and *Luʾluʾat al-Baḥrayn*, a *ṭabaqāt*-work of Imāmī culture, though technically an *ijāza* issued by Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (d.1186/1772) for two of his nephews;[12] examples from the 14th/20th century are *al-Lumʿa al-mahdīya ilāʾl-ṭuruq al-ʿilmiyya* by Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-Kāẓimī (1272–1354/1855–1936), technically also an *ijāza* issued for Mahdī b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Iṣfahānī in 1329/1911,[13] and Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-ʿĀmilī al-Kāẓimī's *Bughyat al-wuʿāt fi ṭabaqāt mashāyikh al-ijāzāt*, an Imāmī *ṭabaqāt*-work which formally is also an *ijāza*, issued in 1326/1908–9 for Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Janfūrī (d. about 1333/1914–15).[14]

The introduction is followed by the actual content, the *matn* of the document, for which al-Samāhījī issues the license to transmit. It is introduced with the usual phrase *fa-ajaztu lahu ... an yarwiya ʿannī* (p.51). The license begins with a detailed autobibliographical list of his own works (pp.51–60) which the recipient is authorized to transmit. Here he often gives further information about things like the occasion, contents, scope, language or significance of the respective titles.[15] Sometimes he notes the time needed to write the single works[16] or, in the case of unfinished works, he notes which parts of a work have already been completed.[17] The autobibliography contains 45 titles of the total 58 works known to have been written by al-Samāhījī. The general phrase at the beginning of the list of works (*fa-ajaztu lahu ... an yarwiya ʿannī ...*), as well as the precise information about the individual titles, indicate that al-Samāhījī intended to present a complete list. The modern-day editor of the *ijāza* assumes that the discrepancy between the number of titles quoted and the total of al-Samāhījī's works occurs because al-Samāhījī wrote some works only after the *ijāza* was issued. In addition, al-Samāhījī may have

left out some titles he deemed less important (p.29).[18] Al-Samāhījī concludes his autobibliography by pointing out that the authorization to transmit covers all his writings, including future ones.[19]

Besides serving other functions, *ijāzāt* always present self-testimonies, insofar as their issuers themselves claim, either implicitly or explicitly, the right to transmit certain subjects of knowledge that they now confer on the *mujāz*. When the *mujīz* issues a permit of transmission for his own works, his right to do so is self-evident and does not need any further comment. When the permit extends to texts by other authors, however, the *mujīz* usually identifies those who have transmitted the knowledge to him, in greater or lesser detail. Often in an *ijāza* a *mujīz* indicates his social rank within the scholarly tradition to which he belongs. In the case of the most comprehensive *ijāzāt*, composed for the most part by prominent scholars at the height of their careers, the authors apparently sought to establish their own eminent position within their professional circle by means of such texts. A typical core element is often the autobibliography of the *mujīz*, usually a complete list of his works finished before the issue of the *ijāza*, but often also including unfinished writings and often providing details about the size, content or other characteristics of the individual titles. Examples of autobibliographical lists within *ijāzāt* are the *ijāza* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī for Muhannāʾ b. Sinān which, apart from the autobibliography arranged by disciplines, does not contain any other element;[20] the *ijāza* of Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī (d. after 906/1501), issued on Monday 10 Jumādā I 896/ 21 March 1491, for Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Gharawī;[21] the *ijāza al-kabīra* of ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī,[22] and the *ijāza* of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī known as *Luʾluʾat al-Baḥrayn*;[23] or the autobibliographical *ijāza* of the Egyptian ophthalmologist and encyclopedian Ibn al-Afkānī (d.749/1348).[24] Frequently, rather than giving an exhaustive autobibliography in an *ijāza*, a *mujīz* included only a selection of his writings.[25]

In addition to authorizing transmission of his own works, al-Samāhījī confers on Nāṣir al-Jārūdī the license to transmit everything he himself has heard from or read to his shaykhs (p.60: *wa-jamīʿ mā samiʿtuhu min mashāyikhī wa-qaraʾtuhu ʿalayhim wa-*

ajāzūhu lī). This sets up the framework for the structure of the following portions of the *ijāza*. Al-Samāhījī discusses his different shaykhs, putting in first place his most important teacher Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī (pp.60 ff.). From him, al-Samāhījī heard *ḥadīth* for which he received two *ijāzās* from Sulaymān, namely in Shaʿbān 1109/ February-March 1698 and in the year 1119/1707–08 (pp.74, 271).[26] Al-Samāhījī confers on the *mujāz* the license of transmission for all the writings of al-Māḥūzī (pp.73–74: *wa-ajaztu lahu ... jamīʿ mā ṣannafahu shaykhī wa-ustādhī* ... Sulaymān ... al-Māḥūzī); he then takes the occasion to give a detailed but avowedly incomplete list of the works of his shaykh, to praise him as a scholar, and to provide information about his place of origin, dates of birth and death, biography and place of burial (pp.75–80).[27] Moreover, al-Samāhījī confers on the *mujāz* the right to transmit everything that Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī passed on from his shaykhs (p.80: *wa-mā rawāhu ʿan mashāyikhihi*). Al-Samāhījī continues to discuss seven teachers of Sulaymān, again noting their writings as far as he knew or considered them significant, evaluating their erudition and providing biographical data, dates of birth and death, and place of burial. Throughout the presentation al-Samāhījī makes every effort to provide the most precise and complete information possible. At the end of his report on al-Māḥūzī's transmitters, he evaluates their relative significance for his teacher, rating Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (1037–1110/1627–1698) as the most important shaykh from whom Sulaymān received an *ijāza* (p.97: *wa-kāna aʿẓam iʿtimādihi fi l-riwāya ʿala'l-ʿAllāma al-Majlisī li-ijāzatihi lahu*), immediately followed by Sulaymān b. ʿAlī al-Iṣbaʿī al-Shākhūrī al-Baḥrānī and Hāshim b. Sulaymān b. Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Katkānī (d.1107/1695–96 or 1109/1697–98): Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī is said to have read to both of them (p.97: *wa-shaykhuhu al-shaykh Sulaymān b. ʿAlī li-qirā'atihi ʿalayhi wa'l-Sayyid Hāshim*). As for the other shaykhs mentioned – Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Ṣāliḥ al-Maqābī al-Baḥrānī (d.ca. 1102/1690–91), Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Qadamī al-Baḥrānī, Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baḥrānī al-Karzakānī (d. before 1128/1716) and Muḥammad b. Mājid b. Masʿūd al-Māḥūzī (d.ca. 1105/1693–94) – Sulaymān only attended some

of their lectures as a listener (p.97: *wa-ammā bāqīhā fa-bi-l-samāʿ minhum fī baʿḍ al-majālis wa'l-madāris*). With the exception of Muḥammad b. Mājid al-Māḥūzī, al-Samāhījī apparently did not meet any of these transmitters personally.

Thereafter, al-Samāhījī discusses two more of his shaykhs: Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ʿAlī al-Nuʿaymī al-Bilādī al-Baḥrānī (d.1130/1718), who was also a fellow student with him under Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī (pp.64–65, 99–100, 114 ff.), and Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥaydar al-Makkī al-ʿĀmilī (d.1139/1726–27) (pp.101–102); al-Samāhījī says that he had received a license of transmission from both (pp.99, 101). According to a marginal note which al-Samāhījī later added to his *ijāza,* he also received an *ijāza* from his teacher ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Baḥrānī (d.1131/1718–19) issued in Jumādā I 1129/ April–May 1717.[28] It should be noted that ʿAlī is the only shaykh whom al-Samāhījī mentions in the *ijāza* without naming his transmitters (p.113). As for the remaining two shaykhs of al-Samāhījī, Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Baḥrānī al-Maʿnī (d.ca. 1130/1717–18) (pp.107–113, 160ff) and Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Sārī (pp.117ff), information is sparse: only their place of origin is indicated, namely Maʿn and Sār, two villages in the region of Awāl. As for Maḥmūd, al-Samāhījī adds that at the time of writing the *ijāza* he was almost a hundred years old and had worked as imam in his home village.

In discussing his shaykhs al-Samāhījī also notes that he personally met some of their transmitters. He states that he met, together with his teacher Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī, Muḥammad b. Mājid al-Māḥūzī in Majid's village, al-Māḥūz, under whom both Sulaymān and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf had studied. On this occasion Sulaymān and Muḥammad b. Mājid are reported to have disputed a legal issue (pp.115–116). Al-Samāhījī further mentions personal meetings with two teachers of his shaykh Muḥammad al-Makkī al-ʿĀmilī on the way to Mecca: Abū l-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Nabāṭī (d.1138/1725–26) and Muḥammad Shafīʿ b. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Astarābādī (d.1117/1705–6) (pp.102, 106).

Proceeding from the list of his shaykhs and their transmitters, al-Samāhījī then draws in his *ijāza* a comprehensive and multi-branched network of Twelver Shiʿi scholars with countless chains

of transmissions. He thereby presents such well-known figures of Imāmī scholarship as Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, the most frequently quoted transmitter to whom al-Samāhījī traces back the chains of transmissions of his shaykhs; Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Ḥārithī al-ʿĀmilī (d.1031/1621), the Shahīd al-Thānī, the Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad b. Makkī al-ʿĀmilī (d.786/1384), the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī and his students, and Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī. Al-Samāhījī also includes more distant chains of transmitters, such as the seven *isnāds* of Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī (pp.166–175).[29]

Having reached Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī in his presentation of transmitters, al-Samāhījī modifies his approach (pp.220ff). He no longer focuses solely on the individual transmitters but also on their respective writings, for which he again indicates the various chains of transmission. In doing so, he does not initially discuss specific writings, but rather the scholar's whole body of works, briefly described by formulae such as *jamīʿ muṣannafāt wa-marwīyāt al-shaykh .../ muṣannafāt wa-marwīyāt al-Sayyid .../ jamīʿ muṣannafāt al-shaykh .../ muṣannafāt al-shaykh .../ kutub wa-marwīyāt al-shaykh* .... The fundamental organizational principle remains, however; chains of transmitters are traced backwards chronologically – but as in the preceding section, these chains are again frequently interrupted to indicate alternative chains. The chains end with Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh (d.381/991), whose routes of transmission are traced back to the Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d.148/765) (p.253), or through the Imams to the Prophet himself (p.255).

Toward the end of this section of the text al-Samāhījī indicates his *isnāds* for quite a few specific works, organized by their respective disciplines. He starts with two individual Imāmī writings, the famous prayer book *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-sajjādiyya* by the Imam ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d.94/712 or 95/713) and the epistle (*risāla*) of Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī (d.450/1058) to the Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (pp.256–257). He then lists numerous works of mostly Sunni authors from the disciplines of the Qur'an reading (*kutub al-qirā'a wa'l-tajwīd*) (pp.257–260),[30] linguistics and lexicography (*kutub al-lugha*) (pp.260–262),[31] and grammar (*kutub*

al-naḥw wa'l-taṣrīf wa'l-ʿarūḍ) (pp.262–266).[32] Al-Samāhījī closes this section with two Sunni Qur'anic exegeses, the *Kitāb al-kashshāf ʿan ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Zamakhsharī (d.538/1144), the *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī (d.c.710/1310), and two canonical *ḥadīth* collections of Sunnis, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (d.256/870) and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim (d.261/875).

In concluding the document, al-Samāhījī again emphasizes the great importance of constructing a link to the Prophet and the Imams by means of chains of transmission, by quoting four traditions with *isnāds* going back to the Prophet and including most of the Imams, as well as numerous prominent Twelver Shiʿi scholars (p.270). In giving his chain of transmitters for the first of the four traditions, al-Samāhījī also indicates the precise circumstances under which he heard this tradition from his shaykh Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī.[33]

The *ijāza* ends with typical standard elements for such texts. These are concisely formulated by al-Samāhījī: he authorizes the *mujāz* to transmit the contents listed in the *ijāza* to whomever he wants, provided the *mujāz* respects the usual conditions, and his recipient is capable of transmitting the knowledge to others (p.276). The document closes with a colophon and final prayer (p.277).

For al-Samāhījī what is most important in his presentation of the Imāmī scholarly network is the greatest possible documentation. Whenever a scholar is mentioned for the first time, al-Samāhījī provides information about him. The only exception to this occurs in the last part of the *ijāza*, in which most of the authors are Sunnis; there only persons who have some relationship with Twelver Shiʿism are discussed (pp.261, 263, 265). The total of 186 entries for individual scholars varies considerably, both in length and in detail. In some cases al-Samāhījī gives only cursory information, indicating, for example, that a certain person was a jurist (e.g. p.227: *wa-kāna faqīhan*) or judge (e.g. p.226: *wa-kāna qāḍiyan*), or that a scholar was an eminent personality (e.g. p.143: *wa-huwa rajul fāḍil*; p.191: *wa-kāna fāḍilan*). By contrast, entries on more important scholars are comprehensive, sometimes

running to eight pages of the printed edition.[34] As a rule, al-Samāhījī gives information about a scholar's erudition, place of origin, dates of birth and death, or even place of burial, and he identifies each person's writings or indicates if the person did not write anything, or if he simply had no information about this. At times al-Samāhījī indicates the family relationships between well-known colleagues; sometimes, he reveals the source of his information, such as the *ijāzāt* of earlier scholars he had access to (e.g. pp.118, 137, 177) or statements of his teacher (pp.81, 90, 134). Quite often he goes beyond the mere listing of facts. He often classifies individual scholars according to their affiliations to the Akhbāriyya or the Uṣūliyya, for example. However, al-Samāhījī does not use these distinctions as his sole criteria for evaluating individual scholars; his comments on them or their specific writings are quite nuanced. In many cases, al-Samāhījī also refers to discussions of relevant topics in his own writings. Khalīl b. Ghāzī al-Qazwīnī, a hardliner Akhbārī, for instance, is reproached for falsifying *ḥadīth*s (p.131); at the same time, members of the Uṣūliyya are more or less fairly discussed by al-Samāhījī, despite his sometimes sharp criticism of them. He begins his entry on the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (pp.182–185), for instance, by appreciating his renown and comprehensive learning. To be sure, al-Samāhījī labels him as a pure *uṣūlī* (p.183: *kāna uṣūlīyan baḥtan wa-mujtahidan ṣirfan*) and faults him for numerous contradictions and negligence in his *ḥadīth* collections and legal works, but he refutes the judgment of Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī that the ʿAllāma was the first to go in the direction of independent legal reasoning. Al-Samāhījī argues, instead, that the ʿAllāma only contributed to the spread of this approach, even if he did so in a crucial way (p.183).

Often al-Samāhījī extends his entry on a scholar to elaborate on other persons who were somehow connected to that scholar, such as family members (pp.69, 132, 232), and predecessors or successors in public offices (pp.69, 109ff); this is done irrespective of whether or not these persons were links in his chain of transmission. One of the most comprehensive digressions within the *ijāza*, which precedes the discussion of al-Samāhījī's teacher

Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī, is the detailed presentation of seven of al-Samāhījī's fellow students under Sulaymān (pp.60–71). Al-Samāhījī himself studied under only two of them: Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAṣfūr al-Dirāzī al-Baḥrānī (d.1131/1718) with whom he studied grammar, and under Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Nuʿaymī al-Bilādī, from whom he received an *ijāza* (pp.99–100). In a strictly functional presentation of chains of transmitters the other five fellow students would actually have no place in the *ijāza*. Also, with regard to other persons discussed in digressions, al-Samāhījī occasionally points out that they held no position in his chains of transmitters. The entry on Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Maqābī (d.1085/1674), for example, is supplemented by a digression on his three sons ʿAbd al-Nabī, Sulaymān and Zayn al-Dīn; al-Samāhījī met each of them personally, but he stresses that none of them was his transmitter (pp.110–111). Detailed information about contemporary scholarly tradition can also be found in the *Ijāza al-kabīra* of ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī, who discusses 68 scholars he met personally during his lifetime.[35] To provide as complete information as possible, al-Baḥrānī similarly mentions numerous scholars in his *Luʾluʾat al-Baḥrayn*, while he specifies that he does not have the right to transmit from them.

The more al-Samāhījī proceeds backwards, the more the chains of transmission fan out. This can be observed already when al-Samāhījī describes his own teachers and their immediate transmitters. Discussing the teachers of Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī (pp.80–90), al-Samāhījī names in three out of seven cases the first level of transmitters, in three cases the second, and in only one case the third level. In discussing the transmitters of his shaykh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Bilādī, al-Samāhījī gives not only the first but also the second level of transmitters in two out of four cases (pp.99, 114). For Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Makkī al-ʿĀmilī, he gives two transmitters; for one of these he names one transmitter, for the other as many as four. In two of the four cases their transmitters too are named (pp.102–105). In the case of the four transmitters of Maḥmūd al-Maʿnī, al-Samāhījī mentions the second level for one of them and goes as far as the third level for another one of them (pp.107–109). In the case of his shaykh Aḥmad al-

Sārī (pp.117–118) al-Samāhījī gives only one transmitter, but notes three of his transmitters. For one of these three he also identifies two further levels of transmitters. Incidentally, it is in speaking of Aḥmad al-Sārī that the term *ḥaylūla* ('break' or 'separation') is used in the document for the first time as an indicator of an alternative *isnād* element in the presentation of the chain of transmitters (p.118). The farther back al-Samāhījī moves chronologically, the more incomplete the chains of transmitters become. Correspondingly, alternative *isnād* elements introduced by *ḥaylūla* become more frequent. Furthermore, expressions are used that are typically employed when the *isnād* fans out: *ʿan mashāyikhihi* (p.86, 106), *ʿan mashāyikhihi minhum* ... (pp.87, 107), *ilā ākhir asānīdihimā* (p.150), *ʿan ʿiddat min mashāyikhihi ashharuhum* ... (p.173), *wa-ghayruhum min al-mashāyikh bi-ṭuruqihim ilā mashāyikhihim* ... (p.182), *ʿan jamāʿa kathīra min talāmidhat* ... (p.182), ... *yarwī ʿan jamāʿa min mashāyikh amthaluhum* ... (p.197), *wa-ghayrihim min al-mashāyikh bi-ṭuruqihim ilā mashāyikhihim* (p.182), *bi-wāsiṭat jamāʿa min mashāyikhihi* ... (p.231),*ʿan ghayr wāḥid min al-thiqāt min aṣḥābihi* (p.208), *rawā ʿan jamāʿa min aṣḥābihi minhum* ... (p.243); *wa-bi-l-ṭuruq allatī dhakarnāhā kullahā ʿan* ... (p.243), *rawā ʿanhu jamāʿa min aṣḥābihi minhum* ... (p.243), *wa-huwa yarwī ʿan jamāʿa min al-thiqāt wa-aʿyān al-ruwāt* (p.248), *wa-huwa yarwī ʿan jamāʿa min al-ruwāt wa-aʿyān al-thiqāt* (p.249); *yarwī ʿanhu jamāʿa* (p.250), *wa-huwa yarwī ʿan jamāʿa* (p.250), *rawā ʿanhu jamāʿa minhum* ... (p.253), *ʿan jamāʿa min aṣḥābihi minhum* ... (p.253).

Another frequently applied method in *ijāzāt* to avoid lengthy presentations of *isnād*s is to refer to the *ijāzāt* of previous scholars where these are fully presented.[36] Al-Samāhījī also uses this method to shorten his descriptions; thus, he refers to the comprehensive *ijāza* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī issued to the Banī Zahra,[37] the comprehensive *ijāzāt* of the Shahīd al-Awwal and Ḥasan b. al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d.1011/1607), the *Kitāb al-ijāzāt* of Ibn Ṭāwūs, and the *Risāla* of Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī (d.368/978).[38] For the same purpose al-Samāhījī refers further to a number of biographical writings for their lists of works and chains of transmitters: the *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (p.183), the *Fihrist* of Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī (pp.204, 238, 256), the *Kitāb al-rijāl* of al-Najāshī,

and the *Fihrist* of Muntajab al-Dīn (d.575/1179–80) (pp.237, 256). For the chains of transmitters of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, al-Samāhījī refers to the former's *Biḥār al-anwār* (p.118).

Because of the many digressions, the increasing incompleteness of *isnāds* and the various methods of presentation that break up the basic organizing principle of progression backward in time, the presentation is sometimes difficult to follow. Nonetheless, the entire document is based on a well thought-out organizational plan that is strictly pursued by the author. The numerous cross-references are further evidence of the coherent basic structure of the *ijāza*.[39]

Against the background of the *ijāza* presented here, one should question Robert Gleave's thesis that this kind of *ijāzāt* and their *isnāds* are above all literary artefacts whose historical value for the reconstruction of scholarly networks is negligible.[40] When assessing the value of al-Samāhījī's *ijāza* as a historical source, one should differentiate between, on the one hand, information about his fellow students, teachers and other contemporaries he met personally and, on the other hand, preceding generations. His descriptions of Imāmī scholars from the time of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī to the early Islamic period is based exclusively on the writings of previous authors, particularly the *ijāzāt* and biographical literature. The value of al-Samāhījī's descriptions of scholars of the past, therefore, lies not so much in his facts, but rather in his comprehensive evaluation of individual scholars or works from the perspective of the Akhbāriyya. By contrast, the value of al-Samāhījī's writings about the generations of scholars from Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī up to the time he wrote the *ijāza* is very high as a historical source, even in reference to facts alone. He met personally most scholars of this period, and he spent quite a long time with many of them. Moreover, the precision and the thoroughness with which he presents his material makes it all the more credible. Furthermore, most of the men portrayed come from Baḥrayn, and the Imāmī scholarly tradition from this area is less documented than is the case with other centres of Twelver Shi'ism.[41]

The historical significance of al-Samāhījī's *ijāza* becomes even

more apparent when one compares his information on Baḥrayn's scholars with later biographical literature, especially al-Baḥrānī's *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*, written in 1182/1768, 52 years later. Although al-Baḥrānī tends not to cite the *ijāza* of al-Samāhījī as one of his sources, a comparison of the respective entries and their sometimes identical word-for-word formulations indicates that the *ijāza* must have been available to al-Baḥrānī. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Bilādī al-Baḥrānī (d.1340/1921–22), who wrote *Anwār al-badrayn fī tarājim ʿulamāʾ al-Qaṭīf wa'l-Aḥsāʾ wa'l-Baḥrayn* in the early 20th century, systematically draws on al-Samāhījī's *ijāza* as a source, and he quotes from it the relevant parts of the entries concerned.

Beyond this, the *ijāza* is a rich source of information about al-Samāhījī's own life and thinking. The various bits of testimonies about himself in it, like his autobibliography, cross-references to his other writings, reports on personal meetings and other biographical data, have already been mentioned. Last but not least, the *ijāza* provides ample material about al-Samāhījī's position within the Akhbārīya; this needs to be taken into account along with his other works.

Notes

* My thanks go to Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi, Etan Kohlberg and particularly to Elizabeth Pond, for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this article.

1. See the methodological proposals of Jan J. Witkam, 'The Human Element Between Text and Reader: The *Ijāza* in Arabic Manuscripts,' in Yasin Dutton, ed. *The Codiology of Islamic Manuscripts*. Proceedings of the Second Conference of Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 4–5 December 1993 (London, 1995), p.131; and of R.Y. Ebied and M.J.L. Young, 'New Light on the Origin of the Term "Baccalaureate",' *Islamic Quarterly*, 18 (1974), p.7. Specific corpora of only text-bound *ijāzāt* are analysed in Georges Vajda, *Les Certificates de lecture et de transmission dans les manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris* (Paris, 1956) and in Pierre A. MacKay, 'Certificates of Transmission on a Manuscript of the *Maqāmāt* of Ḥarīrī (M.S. Cairo, Adab 105),' *TAPS*, NS, 61 (1971), pp.1–81. For examples of text-independent *ijāzāt*, see the studies of Robert Gleave, 'The *Ijāza* from Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī (d.1186/1772) to Sayyid Muḥammad

Mahdī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (d.1212/1797–8),' *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 32 (1994), pp.115–123, and Adam Gacek 'The Diploma of the Egyptian Calligrapher Ḥasan al-Rushdī,' *MME*, 4 (1989), pp.44–55. For further investigations in this field it is helpful to consult indices of *ijāzāt*, for the Imāmiyya set up in Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-Shīʿa* (Beirut, 1403–6/1983–86), vol.1, pp.131–266, vol.11, pp.13–20, and also indices of issuers and recipients of *ijāzāt* in catalogues of manuscripts, for example in Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-yi kitābkhāna-yi ʿumūmī-yi Ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-ʿuẓmā Najafī Marʿashī* (Qumm, 1412/1991–92), index to volume 1, pp.319–351; see also Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften* (Berlin, 1887), vol.1, pp.54–95. The many *kutub al-ijāzāt*, compilations of *ijāzāt* copies, should also be consulted; for a survey of such collections in Twelver Shiʿi Islam, see Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, pp.123–131. New examples of such *kutub al-ijāzāt* are the compilations of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d.1110/1699), *Ijāzāt al-ḥadīth allatī katabahā ... al-Mawlā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī al-Iṣfahānī*, ed. Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qumm, 1410/1989–90) or the compilation edited by Maḥmūd al-Marʿashī containing the *ijāzāt*, which his father Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Marʿashī (1315–1411/1897–1990) received in the course of his life (*Musalsalāt fi'l-ijāzāt muḥtawiyya ʿalā ijāzāt ʿulamā' al-Islām fi ḥaqq wālidī al-ʿAllāma Āyat Allāh al-ʿuẓmā al-Sayyid Abi'l-Maʿālī Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Marʿashī al-Najafī* 1–2 (Qumm, 1416/1995–96). The *Mustadrak Biḥār al-anwār* of Muḥammad b. Rajab ʿAlī al-Ṭihrānī al-ʿAskarī (d.1371/1952), by contrast, containing among others a supplementary volume to al-Majlisī's *Kitāb al-ijāzāt* (cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.21, p.4, no.3675) seems to be lost. The book was never published. The original copy was known to be in the possession of the author's son, Najm al-Dīn al-ʿAskarī, himself a respected religious leader and scholar who lived in the Kāẓimiyya district of Baghdad. After the latter's death in 1396/1976, his collection of manuscripts was seized by the government of Iraq under the law for preservation of national cultural heritage of Iraq. Nothing has been heard about the collection since. (I am indebted to Hossein Modarressi for this information). Attempts to examine this genre more profoundly have been made by J.J. Witkam ('Human Element'), ʿAbd Allāh Fayyāḍ, *al-Ijāzāt al-ʿilmiyya ʿinda'l-Muslimīn* (Baghdad, 1967), who especially considered Twelver Shiʿi material, and by Qāsim Aḥmad al-Sāmarrā'ī, 'al-Ijāza wa-taṭawwuruhā al-ta'rīkhī,' *ʿĀlam al-kutub*, 2 (1981), pp.278–285. For reports on the courses of studies, see Charles Pellat, 'Fahrasa,' *EI2*, vol.2, pp.743–744; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ahwānī, 'Kutub barāmij

al-ʿulamāʾ fi'l-Andalus,' *Majallat maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya*, 1 (1375/1955), pp.91–120; Jacqueline Sublet, 'Les Maîtres et les études de deux traditionnistes de l'époque mamelouke. Al-Mashyakha al-Bāsima lil-Qibābī wa Fāṭima de Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. Étude analytique,' *BEO*, 20 (1967), pp.7–99; Arthur J. Arberry, *A Twelfth-century Reading List: A Chapter in Arab Bibliography* (London, 1951). For certificates of hearing, see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, 'Ijāzāt al-samāʿ fi'l-makhṭūṭāt al-qadīma,' *Majallat maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya,* 1 (1375/1955), pp.232–251, and Stefan Leder, 'Hörerzertifikate als Dokumente für die islamische Lehrkultur des Mittelalters,' in Raif Georges Khoury, ed. *Urkunden und Urkundenformulare im Klassischen Altertum und in den orientalischen Kulturen* (Heidelberg, 1999), pp.147–166.

2. Ed. Mahdī al-ʿAwāzim al-Qaṭīfī (Qumm, 1419/1998–99). See also Āghā Buzurg, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.205, no.1071.

3. For al-Samāhījī, see Andrew J. Newman, 'The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late Ṣafawid Iran. Part 1: ʿAbdallāh al-Samāhījī's *Munyat al-Mumārisīn*,' *BSOAS*, 55 (1992), pp.22–51; idem, 'The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late Ṣafawid Iran, Part 2: The Conflict Reassessed,' *BSOAS*, 55 (1992), pp.250–261; ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Bilādī al-Baḥrānī, *Anwār al-badrayn fi tarājim ʿulamāʾ al-Qaṭīf wa'l-Aḥsāʾ wa'l-Baḥrayn* (Najaf, 1377/1957; reprinted Qumm, 1407/1986), pp.170–175 no.77; ʿAbdallāh al-Mūsawī al-Jazāʾirī al-Tustarī, *al-Ijāza al-kabīra*, ed. Muḥammad al-Samāmī al-Ḥāʾirī (Qumm, 1409/1988–89), pp.200–210; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fi aḥwāl al-ʿulamāʾ wa'l-sādāt*, vols 1–8 (Qumm, 1392/1972), vol.4, p.247; Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾat al-Baḥrayn*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (Najaf, 1386/1966), pp.96–103, no.38. For Nāṣir al-Jārūdī, see al-Baḥrānī, *Anwār al-badrayn*, pp.297–299, no.9; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa* (Beirut, 1403/1983), vol.10, p.202.

4. It seems clear that this *ijāza* was issued at least three years before the one discussed in this article; this conclusion is based on another *ijāza* of al-Samāhījī at the end of his *Munyat al-mumārisīn fi ajwibat suʾālāt al-shaykh Yāsīn* (completed in 1125/1712), issued to Yāsīn b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Bilādī; see Newman, *Nature*, vol.1, p.23; for the *ijāza* to Yāsīn b. ʿAlī al-Bilādī, cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.205 no.1072.

5. Al-Samāhījī completes the enumeration of works heard with him as follows (p.51): *wa-ghayrahā min masāʾil mutabaddida fi majālis mutaʿaddida fi sāʿāt wa-ayyām wa-shuhūr wa-aʿwām fi kathīr min al-ʿulūm wa'l-funūn min al-shurūḥ wa'l-mutūn.*

6. For this type, see al-Tustarī, *al-Ijāza al-kabīra*, pp.47–49. Reciprocal

licenses of transmission were exchanged, for example, between Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d.1104/1693); cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.233 no.1226 b; al-Samāhījī, *Ijāza*, p.104. In the case of Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Marʿashī (d.1411/1990), there were reciprocal licenses between him and ʿAbd al-Wāsiʿ b. Yaḥyā al-Wāsiʿī (1295–1379/1878–1959), Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (1315–1399/1898–1979) and Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī (1293–1389/1876–1970); cf. *Musalsalāt*, vol.1, pp.xxii, xxiv, xxv.

7. See Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, ed. Jawād al-ʿAlawī (Tehran, 1376–1405/1957–85), vol.108, pp.86–87, 91ff, 101–106, 110–113, 118–119.

8. al-Tustarī, *al-Ijāza al-kabīra*, pp.5–12 and passim.

9. P.50: *iltamasa minnī ayḍan an ujīzahu fi jamīʿ mā arwīhi wa-an ubīḥahu riwāyat kull mā adrīhi wa-mā jarā bihi qalamī fi'l-taṣnīf wa-mā arwīhi ʿan mashāyikhī wa-rijāl al-ḥadīth mimmā ittaṣalat bihi silsilat al-isnād ilā sādāt al-ʿibād wa-dhakhīrat al-nās fi l-maʿād.*

10. Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī adds to his introductions of different *ijāzāt* that in his time it was no longer important to attest to the authenticity of the contents of transmission; because of the rich documentation the authenticity is beyond question; see al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*, p.5; Gleave, *Ijāza*, pp.116–117.

11. P.50: *wa-an adhkura lahu jumla min al-ṭuruq wa'l-kutub allatī aḥāṭa bihā ʿilmī wa-balaghahā fahmī min ṭuruq al-khāṣṣa wa-mā ittafaqat min ṭuruq al-ʿāmma li-takūna ijāza tāmma wa-fā'ida ʿāmma ...*

12. Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (Najaf, 1386/1966). For this work, cf. Marco Salati, *Lu'lu'at al-baḥrayn fi l-ijāza li-qurratay al-ʿayn di Shaykh Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (1107–1186/1695–1772): per lo studio della shīʿa di Baḥrayn.* In: *Annali Ca' Foscari*, 28 (1989), pp.111–145.

13. See Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.18, pp.354–355 no.452.

14. Ibid., vol.3, p.137, no.464. For further examples, cf. *Musalsalāt*, vol.1, pp.x-xi.

15. See, for example, p.53 no.6; p.54 nos 7, 8, 9; pp.54–55 no.13; p.55 no.15; p.56 no.22; p.57 no.30; p.58 nos 33, 35, 36; p.59 nos 39, 41; p.60 nos 42, 44.

16. P.52 no.2; p.53 no.5.

17. P.51. no.1; p.55 no.20; p.56 no.24; p.58 no.31; p.59 nos 37, 38.

18. Such attempts of explanation are not fully satisfying. For example, one of the important writings of al-Samāhījī, *Munyat al-mumārisīn*, completed in 1125/1712, three years before the *ijāza*, is missing in the

autobibliography. Perhaps he did not mention the work because Nāṣir al-Jārūdī is quoted in it as his transmitter.

19. P. 60: *wa-jamīʿ mā jarā bihi qalamī fi'l-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ fi'l-maʿqūl wa'l-mashrūʿ wa'l-ḥawāshī wa'l-quyūd mimmā kāna aw yakūnu in shā'a llāh taʿālā wa-min al-inshā'āt wa'l-nuẓum wa-mā ʿulima annahu min masmūʿātī wa-maqrū'ātī aw mujāzātī.*

20. Printed in al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.107, pp.147–149. See also Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.178 no.911.

21. Ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty, 3810:328r-329v; see. S. Schmidtke, *Theologie, Philosophie und Mystik im zwölferschiitischen Islam des 9./15. Jahrhunderts. Die Gedankenwelten des Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī (um 838/1434–35 - nach 906/1501)* (Leiden, 2000), p.270.

22. Pp. 50–57.

23. His autobibliography (pp.446–449) is part of a large autobiographical entry set by al-Baḥrānī at the end of his *ijāza* (pp.442–449).

24. Described by J.J. Witkam, 'Lists of Books in Arabic Manuscripts,' *Manuscripts of the Middle East,* 5 (1990–91), pp.126–130.

25. So Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī in his *ijāza* issued in Jumādā II 934/ February-March 1528 to ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī al-Maysī (d.938/1531–32) and to his son Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī al-Maysī (printed in al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol.108, pp.40–49 no.34); further, several *ijāzāt* of Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī, and some *ijāzāt* of al-Majlisī, see Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.149 no.712, p.150 no.715, p.151. no.726, p.197 no.1022, 1024.

26. See also Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.197 no.1022.

27. P.75: *wa-lahu muṣannafāt kathīra taqrubu min sittīn muṣannafan au akthar ... fa-lladhī yaḥḍurunī al-āna min asmā'ihā wa-taʿdādihā ...*

28. Pp.17, 113 n.4; cf. also al-Baḥrānī, *Anwār al-badrayn*, p.124.

29. For an analysis of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's chains of transmitters, see Schmidtke, *Theologie, Philosophie und Mystik*, Supplement 3.

30. Mention is made of the *Kitāb al-taysīr fi'l-qirā'āt al-sabʿ* of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dānī al-Qurṭubī b. al-Ṣayrafī al-Umawī al-Munīrī (d.444/1053), the *Ḥirz al-amānī wa-wajh al-tahānī* ('*al-Shāṭibīya*') of Abu'l-Qāsim b. Firruh al-Ruʿaynī al-Shāṭibī (d.590/1194), the *Kitāb al-mūjiz fi'l-qirā'āt* and the *Kitāb al-riʿāya fi tajwīd al-qirā'a wa-taḥqīq lafẓ al-tilāwa* of Abu Muḥammad Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib Ḥammūsh al-Qaysī (d.437/1045) as well as his remaining works (*wa-bāqī kutub* Makkī ...); *K. al-Īḍāḥ fi'l-waqf wa'l-ibtidā'* of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Bashshār b. al-Anbārī (d.328/940) and his other works; *K. al-Sabʿa fi manāzil al-qurrā'* of Aḥmad b. Mūsā Ibn Mujāhid al-Muqri' (d.324/936).

31. Quoted are *Tāj al-lugha wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabīya* of Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād al-Jawharī (d.393/1003 or 398 or 400), *Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq* of Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq b. al-Sikkīt (d.243/857), *al-Jamhara fi'l-lugha* of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd al-Azdī (d.321/933), *al-Gharībayn gharībay al-Qurʾān wa'l-sunna* of Abū ʿUbayd Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Harawī al-Fashānī (Bashānī) (d.401/1011) as well as his entire writings (*wa-jamīʿ muṣannafātihi*), *al-Mujmal fi'l-lugha* of Abu'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Fāris b. Zakariyāʾ b. Ḥabīb al-Qazwīnī al-Hamadhānī al-Rāzī (d.395/1005 or 396), *al-Faṣīḥ* of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Thaʿlab (d.291/904) and *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ wa-l-qabas* (*al-qābūs*) *al-wasīṭ* of Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Fīrūzābādī (d.817/1415).

32. Mentioned are *al-Alfīya* of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Mālik al-Ṭāʾī al-Jayyānī (d.672/1273), all the writings of ʿUthmān b. Abī Bakr b. al-Ḥājib (d.646/1249), *al-Lumaʿ fi l-naḥw* of Abu'l-Fatḥ ʿUthmān b. Jinnī (d.392/1002) and all his remaining writings (*jamīʿ kutub* Ibn Jinnī); as well as all the writings of the following persons: Mawhūb b. al-Khaḍir b. al-Jawālīqī (d.539/1144), Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī b. al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī (d.502/1109), Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī (d.377/987), ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm al-Rabaʿī (d.480/1087), Muḥammad b. al-Sarī Ibn al-Sarrāj (d.316/928), Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī al-Zajjāj (d.311/923), Abu'l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d.449/1057), Abu'l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad (d.285/896 or 286/897), Abū ʿUmar Ṣāliḥ b. Isḥāq al-Jarmī (d.225/839), ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Akhfash al-Akbar (d.177/793), Sībawayh (d.presumably 180/796), Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khalīl al-Farāhīdī (d.160/776 or 175/791). I was unable to identify two further grammarians mentioned by al-Samāhījī, al-Thamānīnī and Abu'l-Ḥasan [ibn] ʿAbd al-Wārith.

33. P.271: *wa-huwa mimmā akhbaranī shaykhī ... Sulaymān [al-Māḥūzī] ... qirāʾatan fī Bandar Kunk fī shahr awāʾil Shaʿbān fi'l-sana 1109 ʿan ʿiddat min mashāyikhihi bi-anwāʿ ṭuruq al-taḥammul aʿẓamuhum Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī ...*; p.272: *wa-rawaytu hādha'l-ḥadīth ʿan shaykhī al-ʿAllāma* [Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī] *samāʿan minhu bi-qirāʾat ...* ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd al-Iṣbaʿī (before 1077/1666–67 - 1127/1715) *bi-l-ṭarīq al-madhkūr...*

34. The most extensive entries are dedicated to Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī (pp.73–80), Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (pp.90–97) and Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d.1091/1680) (pp.121–129).

35. Pp.120 ff. In addition, al-Tustarī has a very detailed entry on al-Samāhījī, whom he never met personally (pp.200 ff.).

36. At times, *ijāzāt* also contain partial or complete reproductions of *ijāzāt* from previous scholars; probably the earliest example is an *ijāza* of Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī (d.368/978), drawn up in 356/967 and brought

up to date in 367/978; cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, pp.143–144; vol.2, p.465 no.1807; Aḥmad Monzawī and ʿAlī Naqī Monzawī, 'Bibliographies and Catalogues. ii. In Iran,' *EIR*, vol.4, p.227 no.2; Etan Kohlberg, 'Al-Uṣūl al-Arbaʿumi'a,' *JSAI,* 10 (1987), p.135. See also the *ijāza* of Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Qaṭīfī issued to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Turkī (printed in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.108, pp.89–106 no.44, which contains a complete reproduction of the *ijāza* from Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ṣadaqa, pp.97–101 = *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.236 no.1239). Furthermore, the *ijāza* of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Khātūn al-ʿĀmilī, issued to the Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī (d.940/1534) (printed in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.108, pp.20–27 no.30), which contains a complete reproduction of the autobibliographical *ijāza* (pp.21–23) from the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī to Muhannā' b. Sinān (= *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.178 no.911), of the *ijāza* (pp.24–26) from the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī to Muhannā' b. Sinān dated Dhu'l-Ḥijja 719/ January-February 1320 (= *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.178 no.910), and of the *ijāza* from Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d.841/1437–8) to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥūlānī al-ʿĀmilī, dated Friday, 19 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 825/4 December 1422 (= *Dharīʿa*, vol.1, p.144 no.678) (p.27).

37. P.186: *wa-lahu* [= Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Zahra al-Ḥalabī] *ijāza malīḥa min al-ʿAllāma [al-Ḥillī] taḍammanat al-ahamm min al-ṭuruq ilā aṣḥāb al-taṣānīf wa-qad ajaztu li-mawlānā riwāyatahu ʿannī ʿan mashāyikhī ʿan al-ʿAllāma ʿan jamīʿ mā taḍammanathu min al-ṭuruq kama ajaztu lahu riwāyat ma taqaddama khuṣūṣan mā taḍammanathu ijāzāt al-mashāyikh bi-jamīʿ ṭuruqihim*; see also pp.256–257.

38. Pp.256–257: *wa-ka-dhālika bāqī al-mashāyikh al-madhkūrīn fī ijāzāt aṣḥābinā ka-ijāzat al-shaykh Ḥasan* [printed in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.109, pp.3–79 no.63] *wa'l-Shahīd al-awwal* [printed in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.107, pp.186–192 no.21] *wa-ijāzat al-ʿAllāma li-Abi'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abi'l-Ḥasan b. Abi'l-Maḥāsin Zuhra al-Ḥusaynī al-Ṣādiqī* [printed in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.107, pp.60–137, no.6] *wa-Kitāb al-ijāzāt li'l-Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs wa-Risālat Abī Ghālib al-Zurārī* [and not, as the edition has it: al-Razzāzī] *fa-innahā lam taḥḍurnī al-āna wa-mā lam yudhkar fihā fa-muḥāl ʿalā l-tattabuʿ* ...; cf. also p.265.

39. Pp.105, 109, 186: *al-mutaqaddim dhikruhu*; p.105: *al-madhkūr*; p.99: *al-ātī dhikruhu*; p.193: *wa-qad dhukira*; p.207: *wa-sa-ya'tī dhikruhu*; pp.217, 220: *wa-qad taqaddama dhikruhu*; p.239: *wa-sa-ya'tī al-ishāra ilayhā*; p.238: *kama taqaddamat al-ishāra ilayhi*; p.242: *wa-qad taqaddama fimā maḍā*; p.242: *wa-qad taqaddama taʿrīf* ...

40. Gleave, 'The *Ijāza,*' pp.120–121.

41. A survey of the biographical literature of the Imāmiyya is provided by Angelo Arioli, 'Introduzione alla studio del 'Ilm ar-rijal imamita: le fonti,' in Jacqueline Sublet, ed. *Cahiers d'onomastique arabe* (Paris, 1979), pp.51–89. The following works dealing in particular with Baḥrayn supplement these sources: Sulaymān al-Māhūzī, *'Ulamā' al-Baḥrayn* and *Jawāhir al-Baḥrayn fi 'ulamā' al-Baḥrayn* printed in idem, *Fihrist Āl Bābūya wa-'ulamā' al-Baḥrayn*, ed. Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qumm, 1404/1983–84); Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*; 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Bilādī al-Baḥrānī, *Anwār al-badrayn*; Hāshim Muḥammad al-Shakhsī, *A'lām Hajar min al-māḍīn wa-l-mu'āṣirīn* (Beirut, 1410/1990); 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Muhtadī al-Baḥrānī, *'Ulamā' al-Baḥrayn: Durūs wa-'ibar* (Beirut, 1414/1994). For Imāmī scholarly culture in Baḥrayn, see also Juan R.I. Cole, 'Rival Empires of Trade and Imami Shi'ism in Eastern Arabia,' 1300–1800, *IJMES,* 19 (1987), pp.177–204; Ali Ahmed al-Oraibi, *Shi'i Renaissance: A Case Study of the Theosophical School of Bahrain in the 7th/13th Century* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1992).

5

Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī on God's Volition

Martin J. McDermott

A long-standing puzzle, to me at least, has been how the Muʿtazilī theologian Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Baṣrī (d.436/1044) could say that God's volition is nothing but His motive for what He does. Another known doctrine of this same theologian is that the acts of men occur necessarily in accordance with their motives.[1] This leads us into the basic question of whether, in Abu'l-Ḥusayn's opinion, God's acts are free.

The Memory

Abu'l-Ḥusayn had been a student of the Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbar (d.415/1024) but he later sharply criticized the Bahāshimiyya Muʿtazilīs. Of Abu'l-Ḥusayn's importance there is no doubt. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606/1210) said that in his time the only remaining Muʿtazilī schools were those of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī and Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī.[2] Unfortunately, the theological works of Abu'l-Ḥusayn are lost and his doctrine is only known from remarks of the generally hostile theologians and heresiographers. But now that the writings of two of his distant disciples who lived among subsequent generations have become available, we can try

to form a better idea about why Abu'l-Ḥusayn said some of the things that he did. Through them we re-enter the cultural memory span of the founder of the last Muʿtazilī school.

One of the two theologians who frequently quotes and generally follows Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī is the Muʿtazilī Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī (d.536/1141), who died a full century after Abu'l-Ḥusayn. The whole of his theological treatise, *Kitāb al-fā'iq fi uṣūl al-dīn*, and also the first section of a much larger work, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi uṣūl al-dīn*, have been found in Yaman, and the latter is already published.[3] The text of *al-Fā'iq*, a complete treatise on Muʿtazilī theology is now in the process of publication in Beirut by the same editors.

The other disciple is the Imāmī Shiʿi Sadīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥimmaṣī al-Rāzī (d. after 600/1204). His treatise, *al-Munqidh min al-taqlīd wa'l-murshid ilā'l-tawḥīd* has been published in Iran.[4] In his sections on the unity and justice of God, Sadīd al-Dīn is usually in agreement with the theses of Ibn al-Malāḥimī and he treats many of the same questions, but it seems to have been written for a less sophisticated readership and in a sometimes different order and answering different objections. His pages are often a paraphrase of Ibn al-Malāḥimī, sometimes direct quotations, either attributed or not.

As Sadīd al-Dīn tells us in his preface to *al-Munqidh*, as he was returning from the Pilgrimage, he was met by a group of scholars from al-Ḥilla, who insisted that he come and visit their town. He continues his account:

> Then, after I had stayed for some days, they asked me again to dictate to them some sentences about the root questions of God's unity and justice, which would give them something to remember me by after I should resume my journey and absent myself from them.
>
> So I complied with their second request as I had with the first [to stay a while], and began dictating this commentary. I had resolved to be concise and brief in it, but when I came to the principal and most important questions, my own natural bent did not help me keep my resolution about brevity. I have run on somewhat in my speech, and the result is a disparity of diffuseness and concision among the questions treated in this commentary (*taʿlīq*). And

> there is also another reason causing the disparity, which is that I was dictating the questions. Since what I had already said was no longer there before my eyes and mind, I had no way to maintain evenness and uniformity among the questions and avoid disparity. This too is a plain excuse for what I have mentioned. I have called it *The Iraqi Commentary* and also *The Deliverer from Unthinking Adhesion and the Guide to God's Unity*. So let them call it by whichever of the two names they wish. It is God who gives success and help.
>
> I have begun by treating the temporal production of bodies, imitating what our Sayyid ʿAlam al-Hudā – may God sanctify his spirit - taught in *al-Jumal bayn al-ʿilm wa'l-ʿamal*.[5]

Sadīd al-Dīn calls this a commentary, but on what? He does not say.[6] His desire to leave a memento to the good people of Ḥilla prompted him to dictate it; his inability to remember what he had said from one question to another made the commentary more lengthy than he had intended. The order he follows at the beginning is that of the very short work of the Imāmī al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā. However, the guide consistently followed by Sadīd al-Dīn, whether citing him by name or not, is the one whom he occasionally calls the *ṣāḥib al-fā'iq*: Maḥmūd b. al-Malāḥimī. Did he have the works of Abu'l-Ḥusayn in his hands, or was his access only through Ibn al-Malāḥimī? In either case, his comments are pertinent and often useful for understanding some of Abu'l-Ḥusayn's teachings. But in the question of God's willing, Sadīd al-Dīn does not seem to have anything to add to Ibn al-Malāḥimī.

The Question

That God wills is obvious from the Qur'an. But how He does so, and what we mean by saying so are less than obvious. Does He will eternally or in time? On this the determinists and the Muʿtazilīs were divided. The main point for the latter was to defend the freedom of man, or, more exactly, to defend God from the accusation of being a tyrant puppet-master.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī describes Abu'l-Ḥusayn's position in the context of the other theologians, both the determinists and the Muʿtazilīs. He says:

Chapter on describing God as willing and hating.
Our *shaykh*s differed about the meaning of so describing God:

(1) Our Baṣran *shaykh*s Abū ʿAlī and Abū Hāshim and their companions held that it means something over and above His motive for the action, and they said: In our experience volition (*al-irāda*) is something in addition to the motive for the action. They said it is an inclination of the heart towards the action, but they would not describe God's volition as an inclination. This is also the doctrine of the Kallābiyya, the Ashʿarīs and the Najjāriyya.

(2) The rest of the *shaykh*s, such as Abu'l-Hudhayl, al-Naẓẓām, al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Kaʿbī, denied that there is this additional something in God. Most of them said: The meaning of saying of God that (a) 'He wills His actions' is that He does them and is neither inadvertent nor hating them, and (b) the meaning of saying 'He wills others' actions' is that He has commanded them.

(3) Our *shaykh* Abu'l-Ḥusayn said in the *Kitāb al-taṣaffuḥ* quoting a *shaykh*: Volition is simply the motive or inclining to the preventer of the action, both in our own experience [*fi'l-shāhid*] and with regards to God [*wa'l–ghā'ib*]. And this is the thesis we have chosen in the *Kitāb al-muʿtamad*. And Abu'l-Ḥusayn conceded that with us volition is something over and above the motive for the deed; but he said of God: His volition is His motive for the act. He argued that one of us is motivated to the act in that he merely knows its usefulness, and then he finds himself like one seeking his action when it comes to be. And nothing is plainer than what a man finds in himself.[7]

It seems that, for the Bahāshimiyya *shaykh*s as they are described here, what is over and above the motive (*al-dāʿī*) is not what Aristotle would call the final cause, but simply an inclination that moves the agent efficiently towards the goal. For Abu'l-Ḥusayn, God does not seem to have any final cause, or goal, but wills because He wills. The presumption is that neither God nor man acts necessarily, but Abu'l-Ḥusayn does not try to prove it here.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī goes on later in the same work to put the problem in a slightly different way:

> Chapter on God's not being willing by His essence and not by an eternal volition.
>
> Al-Najjār held that God is willing by His essence, and the Ashʿarīs held He is willing by an eternal volition. And Our *shaykh*s held that He is willing by a temporal volition not in a substrate. And all these differing people concede that the volition is something over and above the motive for the act, free from any disincliner (*ṣārif*) or incliner (*mutarajjiḥ*) to it.
>
> And we have chosen, in what we said above, the position that volition is simply a motive or incliner, so there is no need for us to argue with these differing *shaykh*s of ours, except to discuss with them about the definition of volition, and we show them, as we have said before, that it is nothing but a specified motive. And since we have shown that, it is plain then that it is not good for the Wise One to have a motive for evil; rather He has a disinclination from it, in that He does not will evil acts but rather hates them and despises them, and we are only recounting what our *shaykh*s have told them and logically forced them to.
>
> Our *shaykh*s said: If God were willing by His essence or by an eternal volition, He would have to will all that can be willed, just as when God is knowing by His essence or by an eternal knowledge, according to whoever holds it, then it is logically necessary for Him to know all that can be known. And what can be willed is what can be produced. But His willing all that can be produced leads to an impossibility, and what entails an impossibility is impossible.[8]

One wishes for an explanation of what specifies or inclines God's motive. Man's motive can be influenced or specified by a perceived advantage. But God is not so moved.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī sets out the question also in *al-Muʿtamad*, where he says:

> The Muslims agree on describing God as willing, and there is revelation about this too. But they have differed on what it means to describe the willer as willing both in man and God [*fi'l-shāhid wa'l-ghā'ib*].
>
> Among the *ʿulamā'* is [one] who did not assert that the volition is a matter over and above the mere motives for the act abstracted from what leads away from it [*al-ṣawārif*]. And he has made that the meaning of the willer's being willing both in reference to men and God. And this thesis is the closest to the truth in our opinion.

Other *'ulamā'* have said that being willing is something in addition to the motives to the act, and they made it the meaning of describing the willer as willing both as regards man and God. This is the thesis of our Baṣran *shaykh*s, such as Abū 'Alī and Abū Hāshim and their companions, and it is the thesis of the Kullābiyya, the Ash'ariyya and the Najjāriyya. The rest of our *shaykh*s denied this additional something of God. They are Abu'l-Hudhayl, Abū Isḥāq al-Naẓẓām, Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ, Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ka'bī, and others.

Shaykh Abu'l-Hudhayl said that God wills His acts, and His volition of them is His creation of them, but His creation of them is other than they. And God wills the acts of others in the sense that He has commanded them.

Abū Isḥāq al-Naẓẓām said that God wills His acts, and His volition of them is the thing willed; and [He is] willing the acts of others, and His willing them is His command of them, and His volition might be His judgment (*ḥukmuh*), he said, because He might express by the volition the willed. We say: 'You have brought me my will (*irādatī*),' that is, what I willed. And it is said: 'God wills the resurrection to happen,' that is, He has decided that. He said it might be volition of a thing, in the sense of its being brought near, as in His saying: 'a wall that wants to fall (*Sūrat al-Kahf*, 77),' and it might be in the sense of conscience [*ḍamīr*], which is impossible in God.

Abū 'Uthmān [al-Jāḥiẓ] and Abu'l-Qāsim said: God wills His own acts, that is, He does them neither inadvertently nor unwillingly (*wa lā mukrih*), and He wills the acts of others in the sense that He commands them.

As for our *shaykh* Abu'l-Ḥusayn, he asserted that the volition is a matter over and above the motive in the visible world. And he said: God's being willing refers to His motive for the act. And he argued that volition is a matter over and above the motive in the visible world in that when a man finds unalloyed utility in something, he knows himself as seeking it, and he finds this search as arising out of this knowledge and following upon it. There is nothing plainer than what a man finds out from his own experience.[9]

Ibn al-Malāḥimī argues that the additional 'something' (*ma'nā zā'id*) that others maintain inclines men to will an act is pleasure (*al-masarra*), which is proper to bodies, and is impossible in God.[10] The people who argue for this kind of volition in God are the

anthropomorphists, so of course that is ruled out. Then he goes on to quote Abu'l-Ḥusayn's argument against the same adversaries:

> *Shaykh* Abu'l-Ḥusayn argued for denying this volition [i.e., with an added factor inclining the will] of God in the *Kitāb al-taṣaffuḥ* saying: God's volition either follows His motive or does not follow His motive. The latter would make it necessary that God is willing by His essence, or by an eternal volition, or that He does not cause in any way. This is what we will refute, if God wills.
>
> And if His volition follows His motive, He must will for a motive or not for a motive. If He makes the volition for no motive, it is vain, and if He does it for a motive, the motive must either refer to the doer or to the one it is done for, or to the act. But He cannot do it for a motive going back to the act, that is, doing the volition, because it [i.e. the volition] influences the act; for if [the volition] influenced the act it would influence it either in its existence or its occurrence in a certain way. But the first is false because the volition either influences the act in that the act occurs by the volition, or the volition motivates the act and instigates it (*tabʿath ʿalayh*), and in the first case, it suffices for Him to be able, and in the second too, it suffices for Him to be able.[11]
>
> Thus, Abu'l-Ḥusayn has God willing, it seems, for no reason.

Notes

1. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-arbaʿīn fi uṣūl al-dīn* (Hyderabad, 1353 AH), p.227. Question 22, 'on the creation of acts,' speaks of 'those who hold that the act is based on the motive, and if ability is present and the motive is combined with it, they together become the necessitating cause of the act. This is the thesis of most of the philosophers and it is the choice of Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī among the Muʿtazilīs.' Al-Rāzī goes on to point out that this leads to determinism, a strange passage for a Muʿtazilī.

2. Al-Rāzī, *Iʿtiqād firaq al-Muslimīn wa'l-mushrikīn,* ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Rāziq (Cairo, 1356/1938). See also W. Madelung, 'Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī,' *EI2, Supplement,* pp.25–26.

3. Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn,* the extant parts edited by Martin McDermott and Wilferd Madelung, (London, 1991). The Introduction by Madelung sets out fully what is known of him and his writings.

4. Edited by M. Hādī al-Yūsufī (Qumm, 1412/1992).
5. *Al-Munqidh*, vol.1, p.18.
6. Madelung points out that Sadīd al-Dīn also relied on Abu'l-Ḥusayn's *Kitāb al-ghurar*. See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *al-Muʿtamad*, Introduction, p.vii.
7. Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *al-Fāʾiq*, Ms. Great Mosque, Ṣanʿa', no.189, fol. 18r.
8. Ibid., fol. 65v.
9. Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *al-Muʿtamad*, pp.240–241.
10. Ibid., p.251.
11. Ibid., p.252.

6

Between Qumm and the West: The Occultation According to al-Kulaynī and al-Kātib al-Nuʿmānī

Andrew J. Newman

In our study, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shīʿism*, based on the traditions on the subject in *al-Kāfī fī ʿilm al-dīn*, the collection of over 16,000 traditions assembled by Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d.329/941), we have noted the problematic nature of Qumm's understanding of the occultation (*al-ghayba*). Qummīs, and particularly members of the city's dominant Ashʿarī clan, account for 23 of the 34 traditions on the occultation in Chapters 79 and 80 which are dedicated to the subject in the *Kitāb al-ḥujja*, in the first part of the collection entitled *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfī*. Of these 23 traditions, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī narrated ten; al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī and ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. after 307/919) each narrated five; and Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī narrated three. The Qummī/Ashʿarī dominance of these traditions parallels their dominance of the *isnād* of the bulk of *al-Kāfī*'s traditions more generally. Qummīs, including Ashʿarīs, narrated nearly three-quarters of the 7599 traditions in *al-Kāfī* examined for our earlier

study; ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā alone narrated 53 per cent.[1]

These traditionists narrated the texts on the occultation and other subjects from such figures as the money-changer Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar (d. before 179/795), Muḥammad b. Sinān (d.220/835), Muḥammad b. Ḥassān al-Rāzī and Aḥmad b. al-Hillāl, all condemned as unreliable by some later scholars such as Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī (d.450/1058–9) and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067), both based in Iraq. They also narrated traditions from ʿAbdallāh b. Bukayr and the Kūfans Ayyūb b. Nūḥ, Abān b. Taghlib, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Najrān, al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb al-Sarrād/al-Zarrād (d.224/838) and ʿAbdallāh b. Jabala, the latter all 'trustworthy (*thiqa*)' according to al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī.[2] Despite this mixture of 'reliable' and 'unreliable' names in the *isnād* of their traditions, the above-named Qummī/Ashʿarī traditionists were themselves judged reliable.[3]

In some of these texts, the Imams spoke of *al-qā'im* as having one occultation, whereas in others the same narrators narrated traditions pointing to two. In one, Imam ʿAlī spoke of one occultation as lasting six days, six months or six years.[4] Moreover, *al-Kāfī* contained no references to an individual formally designated to act as the Imam's intermediary (*safīr*) during the occultation, let alone to any of the four individuals later understood as having been specifically designated as the intermediaries (*sufarā'*). The Qummī origins of the majority of *al-Kāfī*'s traditions on the occultation bespeak Qummī uncertainties over, and apprehension with, the nature and length of the occultation.

Less than fifteen years after the death of al-Kulaynī in 329/941, segments of the community outside Qumm were addressing precisely those occultation issues which had concerned the Qummīs. This is demonstrated by examination of both the *isnād* and the substance of the 90 'numbered' and 15 'unnumbered' traditions on the occultation in the six sections (*fuṣūl*) of Chapter (*bāb*) 10 of the *Kitāb al-ghayba*, compiled around 342/953 by al-Kulaynī's student Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmānī (d.345/956 or 360/971), known as 'the Scribe' (*al-Kātib*) based on his studentship with the compiler of *al-Kāfī*.[5]

Al-Nuʿmānī studied with al-Kulaynī and visited Shīrāz in 313/925 where he studied with, and narrated traditions from, a relative of Saʿd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ashʿarī (d.301/913–14), the noted Qummī traditionist, clan and political leader. Around 327/938, al-Nuʿmānī was in Baghdad studying with the Kūfan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd, Ibn ʿUqda (d.333/944), and others. In 333/944, he was in Syria, visiting Damascus and Aleppo; he died in Syria. Al-Najāshī called al-Nuʿmānī a 'shaykh of our companions ... and correct of belief (*ṣaḥīḥ al-ʿaqīda*)'; his essay in refutation of the Ismailis and a *tafsīr* work are also noted.[6]

The Sources of al-Nuʿmānī's Traditions on the Occultation

Of the 105 traditions cited by al-Nuʿmānī, 30 (28 per cent) were narrated[7] from Muḥammad b. Hammām al-Iskāfī (d.336/947), classified as 'trustworthy' by al-Ṭūsī;[8] 27 (26 per cent) were cited from *al-Kāfi*, all from the 34 traditions in *al-Kāfi*'s *Kitāb al-ḥujja*. Thus, al-Nuʿmānī cited more than three-quarters of *al-Kāfi*'s 34 traditions on the occultation.[9] Eighteen (17 per cent), of the 105 were narrated from the Kūfan Aḥmad b Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUqda (d.333/944), a client (*mawlā*) of the Banū Hāshim. Although Ibn ʿUqda was a Zaydī Jārūdī, al-Najāshī noted 'all our companions attest to his being trustworthy.' Al-Ṭūsī said he related traditions from Ibn ʿUqda via one of his teachers. Later Twelvers also praised him.[10] Nine traditions (8 per cent) of the 105 were narrated from ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bābawayh (d.329/940), father of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d.381/991–2), praised by al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī, who visited Iraq and met with al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d.326/937), the third *safīr*.[11] ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. ʿAbdallāh b Yūnis, from Mawṣil, and judged 'trustworthy' by one of al-Ṭūsī's teachers, narrated seven.[12]

These five, judged reliable by al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī, narrated 89 (85 per cent) of the 105 traditions. Al-Iskāfī, Ibn ʿUqda and al-Kulaynī alone narrated 73 (70 per cent). Whereas Qummīs narrated more than two-thirds of *al-Kāfi*'s traditions on the occultation, the above-named three 'reliable' non-Qummīs, excluding al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh's father, narrated 55 (52 per cent)

of al-Nuʿmānī's 105 traditions on the subject; al-Iskāfī and Ibn ʿUqda narrated 48, accounting for 46 per cent.

Some of the individuals whose names feature in the *isnād* of al-Nuʿmānī's traditions were later adjudged reliable. These include ʿUbaydallāh b. Mūsā al-ʿAlawī al-ʿAbbāsī, whose name appears in ten *isnād*; ʿAbdallāh b. Bukayr al-Shaybānī, in nine, including some cited from *al-Kāfī* (unnumbered tradition on 244, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 337/5; 256/14, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 337–8/6; 257/16, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 339/12); the Kūfan Wāqifī ʿAbdallāh b. Jabala (d.219/834) in eight, one from al-Kulaynī (unnumbered tradition on 259, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 338/9); the Qumm-based ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī, who travelled to Kūfa in the 290s/902–12 and narrated traditions from Kūfans, in seven; the Kūfan ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Najrān, called 'trustworthy' by al-Najāshī, in six, including two cited from *al-Kāfī* (e.g. unnumbered tradition on 219, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 336/3; unnumbered tradition on 238–9, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 336–7/4); the Kūfan Fatḥī ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan, in five; the Kūfan al-Ḥasan b Maḥbūb al-Sarrād/al-Zarrād in five, including one from *al-Kāfī* (249–50/2, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 340/19); the Kūfan Abān b. Taghlib (d.141/758–59), in three, one from *al-Kāfī* (unnumbered tradition on 231, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 340/17); Ḥumayd b. Ziyād (d.310/922–23), from Nineveh but of Kūfan origin, who narrated three; the Kūfan Wāqifī moneychanger al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Samāʿa (d.263/876–77) in three; Ḥammād b. ʿĪsā (d.ca. 208/823), a Kūfan based in Baṣra, in three; the Kūfan Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Bazīʿ, a companion of Imam Mūsā, also in three; Ayyūb b. Nūḥ, the Kūfan financial agent of the Imams, in three, two from *al-Kāfī* (246/9, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 341–2/25; 273/39, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 341/24); the Kūfan Fatḥī Yūnis b. Yaʿqūb, in two; and the Kūfan Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Ibrāhīm, in one. Together these individuals appeared in 71 *isnād*, 68 per cent of the total. All in all, Kūfans narrated 45 (43 per cent), of the 105 traditions.[13]

While these scholars, like al-Nuʿmānī himself, were judged reliable by later Twelver scholars – like the Ashʿarī-Qummī traditionists from whom al-Kulaynī narrated so many texts – others from whom al-Nuʿmānī collected traditions or whose names featured in their *isnād* were not. Al-Nuʿmānī narrated ten of the chapter's traditions from the Ramalla-based ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-

Bandanījī, deemed 'weak,' all narrated via the reliable 'Ubaydallāh b. Mūsā al-'Alawī. Together with the 55 traditions from the three reliable non-Qummī traditionists, 65 (62 per cent) of al-Nu'mānī's 105 traditions on the occultation were narrated by non-Qummīs.

Among the problematic individuals whose names appeared in al-Nu'mānī's *isnād*, that of Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar appeared in 13 of the 105, including traditions narrated by al-Iskāfī (218/10, 255/11), Ibn 'Uqda (237/3, 250–1/5, 255/10), 'Abd al-Wāḥid (217–8/9), an unnumbered tradition narrated from al-Kulaynī from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ash'arī via the Kūfan Ibn Abī Najrān (219, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 336/3) and other traditions cited by al-Nu'mānī from al-Kulaynī (235/2, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 333/1; 253/9, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 340/20). The Kūfan Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Mālik was condemned by al-Najāshī as 'weak in *ḥadīth*,' as having fabricated texts and narrated from unknown individuals. Condemned by al-Ṭūsī and Aḥmad b. 'Ubaydallāh, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī (early 5th/11th century), Ja'far b. Muḥammad appears in 13 *isnād* (12 per cent), all collected by al-Nu'mānī from al-Iskāfī and some narrated via Mufaḍḍal (218/10, 255/11) and Muḥammad b. Sinān (264/29, 266–7/32). Muḥammad b. Sinān, condemned as 'weak' by al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī, features in 11 (10 per cent). These include traditions narrated to al-Nu'mānī from such reliable traditionists as al-Iskāfī (264/29, 266–7/32), Ibn Bābawayh's father (278/1, 279/2, 279/3, 279/4), 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. 'Abdallāh (279–80/5) and 'Ubaydallāh (266/31, 266/33).

The Kūfan Abu'l-Jārūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhir (d.after 150/767), condemned by al-Kashshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, narrated nine, including traditions collected from al-Iskāfī (261/24, 266–7/32), Ibn Bābawayh's father (278/1, 279/2, 279/3) – all three via Muḥammad b. Sinān – and the Mawṣilī 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. 'Abdallāh (279–80/5), also via Muḥammad b. Sinān. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥillāl, (d.267/880–1), deemed extremist (*ghālī*) by al-Ṭūsī, features in eight *isnād*, including traditions narrated via 'Ubaydallāh (237–8/4, 271) and an unnumbered tradition cited from *al-Kāfī* (244, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 342/29). The Kūfan 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Imrū al-Khath'amī, called 'reliable' by al-Najāshī but a *wāqifī* and 'evil' (*khabīth*) by al-Ṭūsī, featured in eight, six collected from 'Abd al-

Wāḥid b. ʿAbdallāh and one from al-Iskāfī (226/20). The Kūfan moneychanger Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm, 'weak' and 'corrupt of belief' and expelled from Qumm as such in the late 200s/early 900s according to al-Najāshī, appeared in five of the nine traditions collected by al-Nuʿmānī from Ibn Bābawayh's father (225/18, 225/19, 274/43, 277/45, 278/1); these featured the 'weak' al-Rāzī, the 'trustworthy' Kūfan Yūnis b. Yaʿqūb narrating from Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar, the 'reliable' scholars Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ashʿarī, al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb and ʿAbdallāh b. Jabala, and the 'unreliable' al-Yamānī, Muḥammad b. Sinān and Abu'l-Jārūd. Muḥammad b. Ḥussān al-Rāzī, condemned by al-Najāshī as having transmitted texts from 'weak' figures, appears in four traditions, all collected from Ibn Bābawayh's father, one (274/43) narrated from the reliable Qummī Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā. The Kūfan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qalānisī, 'trustworthy' according to al-Kashshī but 'weak' according to al-Najāshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, narrated three traditions, all collected from the problematic al-Bandanījī. Two (258/18, 267/33) were narrated via the 'reliable' 'Ubaydallāh, the first via Ayyūb b. Nūḥ, the 'trustworthy' Kūfan, via Ibn Bukayr, the second via Muḥammad b. Sinān. The Shāmī traditionist Ummiyat b. ʿAlī al-Qaysī, condemned as 'weak' by al-Najāshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, appeared in three, one collected from al-Iskāfī (270–1/36), and two unnumbered traditions, one collected from al-Bandanījī (271) and another, unnumbered, cited via Aḥmad b. al-Hillāl (271). Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar al-Yamānī, from Ṣanʿā', deemed 'trustworthy' by al-Najāshī but condemned as 'weak' by Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, appeared in one tradition narrated by Ibn ʿUqda via Ibn Abī Najrān (250/3) and another collected from Ibn Bābawayh's father via the 'trustworthy' Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā via the 'weak' al-Rāzī (277/45).[14] Taken together, these individuals, all later deemed 'unreliable,' featured in 88 *isnād*, accounting for 84 per cent of the 105.

Thus, like *al-Kāfī,* compiled by al-Kulaynī in Baghdad during the last two decades before his death in 329/941, al-Nuʿmānī's *Kitāb al-ghayba*, assembled around 342/953, contained the traditions of narrators whose reliability was questioned, in the main, only in later decades. The Baghdadī community of the 5th/

tury, as represented by al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī, seems to have been more discriminating than those at the turn of the century in Qumm and the early 4th/10th century in Iraq and Syria.

The Occultation Resolved

The key difference between the two collections' traditions on the occultation lies in the origins of their sources. The bulk of al-Kulaynī's traditions on the subject were drawn from Qummī sources while the majority of al-Nuʿmānī's traditions derive from non-Qummī ones.

A brief synopsis of the six sections of the *Kitāb al-ghayba*'s Chapter 10 suggests that to the west of Qumm in particular, based on a body of traditions not available in Qumm earlier, the community was addressing and evolving solutions not understood by or available in Qumm a few decades earlier. Al-Nuʿmānī's collection suggests the community was now coming to understand that there would be a shorter and longer occultation, that during the first, shorter absence, the community was in contact with the Imam via intermediaries, and that the second occultation in which the community was now living, would be prolonged, and that the occultation's end was a matter for divine, not human, determination.

In the first section's ten numbered and two unnumbered traditions, the latter both from *al-Kāfī*, the Imams stated that Allah would raise up a member of their family who would enter occultation, that the earth would never be devoid of a *ḥujja*, that men would not recognize him and he would be in hiding owing to oppression, that the Imāmī Shiʿis would be mocked in their belief, that the occultation of a member of ʿAlī's family was like that of the prophet Yūsuf or ʿĪsā, and that his return would be accompanied by such events as war among the sons of al-ʿAbbās and plague. After the fifth tradition, al-Nuʿmānī commented (214) that the traditions mention the occultation, the Lord of the Occultation (*ṣāḥib al-ghayba*) and that information about the occultation would itself be hidden. In the remaining traditions, the Imams noted the Imam would disappear in the year 260/

873–4 (214/6, 215/7, the latter from *al-Kāfī* 1: 341/23), that in this period believers were to stay together, do good and be kind to each other, and that the absence would be so long that people would ask if he had been killed or had died. Al-Nuʿmānī ended the section stating that the Shīʿa should take heart in the midst of *fitna*s and challenges from 'false schools' (*al-madhāhib al-fāsida*), those who separate themselves from the Shīʿa and false ʿAlid claimants to the imamate. The section's traditions contained two references to the number twelve (217/9, 219/10).

The ten traditions of the second section (221–34) are numbered in sequence from the ten of the first. In these, the Imams cautioned believers to keep the faith especially during the absence of 'the fifth of the children (*wuld*)' of the seventh Imam (221/1, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 336/2), stated that when *al-qā'im* returns people would marvel, cited the Prophet as saying his family are like stars, that when one disappeared another would appear, stated that the Lord of the Age (*ṣāḥib al-amr* or *al-qā'im*) was the family member of whom all would ask if he had died and that he would arise with a sword (225/19, cited via Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar), and identified the period of disagreements among the Shīʿa as the time in which *al-qā'im* would return.

Al-Nuʿmānī ended the chapter commenting that these traditions highlighted disagreements among the Shīʿa. Some were saying the Imam had died, or asking how long he could possibly live, especially since he would now be more than eighty years old, while others held he had died, that the imamate had passed to others or that he had never existed at all. They did not believe in Allah's power to extend life beyond human comprehension and experience, as with such earlier prophets as Mūsā. Al-Nuʿmānī ended with an appeal to the community: 'O Shīʿa ...stand firm, praise Him [i.e. Allah]' for having been chosen as a special community and having received such a blessing (*niʿma*).

In the eight numbered and two unnumbered traditions, both from *al-Kāfī*, of the third section (228–35), the Imams are quoted as stating that the occultation might be prolonged and believers might not know their Imam, that believers were to hold fast to their friends, continue to know their enemies and be watchful for

the return – to emphasise this latter point al-Nuʿmānī referred to a similar tradition from *al-Kāfī* (229, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 342/28) – that this period was one in which knowledge (*ʿilm*) was to be gathered, that the community was to hold firm but that suddenly one day the Imam would return and that there would be disputes among the Shīʿa such that some would call others liars – again, al-Nuʿmānī referred to a similar tradition from *al-Kāfī* (231, 1: 340/17).

After the eighth and last tradition, al-Nuʿmānī explained (232–34) that these traditions attested to the occultation and the disappearance of knowledge and that this time would be difficult because believers would not know him, his name or his whereabouts. Al-Nuʿmānī explained the statement in the fourth tradition (229/4), narrated from al-Iskāfī from al-Ḥimyarī, on the absence in 'the period of confusion (*ḥayra*)' of any guide or sign from the Imam, as a reference to the end of the role of the intermediaries (*sufarā*) who had stood between the Imam and the Shīʿa. In this period the intermediary would be knowledge (*ʿilm*) itself.

The fourth section (235–49) contained 11 numbered and five 'unnumbered' traditions, the latter all drawn from *al-Kāfī*. In these, the Imams stated that the most difficult time for the community, when they could not see the *ḥujja*, was when they must remember that neither the *ḥujja* nor the pre-existential pact (*mīthāq*) between Allah and the Shīʿa was invalid,[15] and they compared the absence of the *ḥujja*, or the Lord of the Age (*ṣāḥib al-amr*), to the absences of Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Yūsuf and Muḥammad (237–9/3, 4, 5); between the fourth and fifth al-Nuʿmānī referred to a further, similar text from *al-Kāfī* (237, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 336/4). In the sixth tradition, Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq stated that the *qāʾim* would be in occultation before he arose, that some would say his father died without children, others that a child was still in his mother's womb, that he was in hiding or that he had predeceased his father. This was a test. The Imam counselled a special prayer and advised on the signs preceding the return. Al-Nuʿmānī then referred to two similar traditions from *al-Kāfī* (244, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 337/5, 342/29), the second narrated via the extremist Aḥmad b. al-Hillāl who said he had heard the statement and the prayer from the Imam fifty-six years earlier. In the remaining traditions, the Imams stated that

the one who would undertake the *khurūj* was one whose birth would be secret, that Allah would choose a child of whose birth and life nothing would be known and that the *ṣāḥib hādhā al-amr* would be in occultation. One numbered and two unnumbered traditions from *al-Kāfī* (246/9, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 341/25; 245, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 342/26; 247, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 335/11) reinforced al-Nuʿmānī's 'new' traditions.

Al-Nuʿmānī then commented that the individual who would be in occultation was the expected Imam (*al-imām al-muntaẓar*). Of whom else, he asked, were people so unsure about his birth and whereabouts but the one whom people could not see, knew nothing of, and of whose existence they had no faith? Those who mocked the believers would be condemned at his rising, he said. But, given that he had not been seen for so long, many would forget the promise of the Imam's existence.

The fifth section (249–78) contained 46 numbered and seven unnumbered traditions, three of the latter were cited from *al-Kāfī*. In a number of these traditions the Imams speak of two occultations, a shorter and a longer one,[16] and that the Imam was not beholden to anyone as to when he would reappear. During the longer occultation, it would be said that he had died, had been killed or had fled; only a few would have any information about him (250/5, Ibn ʿUqda via Mufaḍḍal). The *nā'ib* or vicegerent would appear in the second, stated Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (251/6). Other traditions also mentioned two occultations (unnumbered on 251 and 252/8, both from ʿAbd al-Wāḥid via the problematic al-Khathʿamī). Others noted shorter and longer occultations and listed signs that would precede the Imam's return, including the coming of al-Sufyānī (252/7),[17] and that there would be two occultations, in one of which the *ṣāḥib* would return and in the other it would be said he had died (253/9).

Al-Nuʿmānī then explained (253–4) that during the first occultation the intermediaries (*sufarā'*) between the Imam and the people (*khalq*) would deal with issues and problems posed to the Imam. 'The second occultation (*al-ghayba al-thāniya*),' he explained, is that in which the intermediaries and mediators (*wasā'iṭ*) who assumed certain tasks for which Allah had prepared them,

citing the Qurʾan 3: 179, were no longer present. 'This age is upon us now,' stated al-Nuʿmānī.

A number of traditions explained verses from the Qurʾan as references to the occultation. The verses included 26: 21 (255/10, 11, 12, the first two via Mufaḍḍal and the last via al-Khathʿamī), after which al-Nuʿmānī explained (254) that these supported the fifth tradition of the previous chapter (239/5), in which Imam al-Bāqir had explained that the Imam's absence was similar to those of Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Yūsuf and Muḥammad (see also 262/27); 67: 30 (257/17), after which he referred to a similar tradition in *al-Kāfī* (1: 339/14); 27: 62, as referring to the expected Imam (264/30); and that 74: 8 meant that an Imam from the family of the Prophet would be hidden and would reappear at the command of Allah (273/40, cited from *al-Kāfī*, 1: 343/30, via Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar).

In three subsequent traditions, two from *al-Kāfī* and all via Ibn Bukayr (254/14, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 337/6; 256/15; 257/16, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 339/12), the Imams referred to two occultations and said that the Imam will appear during the pilgrimage and be able to see his people without their seeing him. Four traditions (258–9/18, 19, 20, 21), the first from al-Bandanījī via al-Qalānisī and Ayyūb b. Nūḥ, all cited via Ibn Bukayr, attested that fear of being murdered was the cause of the occultation. Al-Nuʿmānī referred also to a similar tradition in *al-Kāfī* (259, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 338/9). Four traditions follow in which the Imams noted that the *qāʾim* would have the name of the Prophet himself (259/22, 261/24, 262/26) and would arise from Mecca given the right circumstances (261/25). What is more clear, asked al-Nuʿmānī (261–2), about the occultation for the community? In three traditions the Imams predicted that singing from heaven would presage the end of the occultation. In one (262/28) this was when the Shīʿa would lose the third child and all will be heartbroken. In another (264/29) the singing would be of the *qāʾim*'s name, which was that of the Prophet. In the next four (266–7/31, 32, 33, 34), two narrated from al-Bandanījī, two from Ibn Bābawayh's father and all via Muḥammad b. Sinān, the Imams remarked that often people would think a certain individual was the *qāʾim*, but that Allah would in the end

raise up someone of whom no one knew anything. Al-Nuʿmānī then reiterated (267–9) that the earth would not be devoid of an Imam and he would return with a sword.

In subsequent traditions, the Imams stated that the *qāʾim* would be the youngest and least known of the Imams (269/35), that after al-Riḍā, the eighth Imam, his son ʿAlī and two more ʿAlīs would follow a 'period of confusion' (*ḥayra*) after which the listener was told to be in Medina (270/36), and that after the death of his descendant ʿAlī there would be another light which would then disappear, but in this period no one should doubt (271/37). Al-Nuʿmānī referred to two further, similar, unnumbered traditions, one each from Aḥmad b. Hillāl and al-Bandanījī (271). Which 'period of confusion' is greater than that in which we now live, asked al-Nuʿmānī (271–2), when so many no longer believe? Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq then denied that he, his son, grandson or great-grandson were the Lord of the Age (*ṣāḥib al-amr*) (272/38, cited from *al-Kāfī*, 1: 341/21).

In the last seven traditions of this section, the Imams referred to an occultation (273/41, from *al-Kāfī*, 1: 340/16; 274/42, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 340/15; 274, unnumbered tradition from *al-Kāfī*, 1: 338/9), stated that when the *qāʾim* arose all would deny him except those with whom Allah had a pact (274/43, from Ibn Bābawayh's father from al-Rāzī), that the *qāʾim* would live as long as al-Khalīl (Ibrāhīm), who had lived more than 120 years, and would reappear as a 32–year-old to fill the earth with justice (275/44); al-Nuʿmānī then emphasized (275–7) the reassurance in the Imam's statement concerning the *qāʾim*'s age. The Imam had cautioned against believing those who claim to know when the Imam would reappear. The last two traditions, cited from Ibn Bābawayh's father from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā from the unreliable al-Rāzī (277/45) and from *al-Kāfī* (278/46, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 342/27, cited also by al-Nuʿmānī as 250/4), stated that the *qāʾim* would not arise at a time of human choosing.

The sixth and last section contained five numbered traditions. The first three, from Imam ʿAlī, according to al-Nuʿmānī, 'confirm the matter of the occultation and attest to its reality and its existence and to the situation of 'the period of confusion' in which

people are now, and that there will be discord (*fitna*) and that no one will be saved unless he is steadfast.' In the fourth, Imam al-Bāqir stated that the believers' situation would be as if they were entirely alone. In the fifth, the same Imam, echoing the statements of ʿAlī, compared the believers and their waiting to that of a terrified goat before a butcher, without any higher recourse or refuge. Al-Nuʿmānī closed the section and the chapter with the comment that (280–1) the absent Imam was that higher refuge. Allah, at His own time of choosing, will restore the Imam and those who have held fast will be delivered.

Al-Nuʿmānī's contribution bespeaks a continuing effort by sectors of the community outside of Qumm to collect further traditions and thereby address points of concern in the corpus of texts on the occultation collected earlier from Qummī traditionists. Although al-Nuʿmānī did include a large number of traditions previously cited by al-Kulaynī – 27 of *al-Kāfī*'s 34 – those cited, and not cited, from *al-Kāfī* mainly reinforced al-Nuʿmānī's 'new' traditions. Significantly, however, al-Nuʿmānī dropped the text in which Imam ʿAlī spoke of one occultation as lasting six days, six months or six years (*al-Kāfī* 1: 338/7).

Discussion of nature and length of the occultation, and the manner in which the community might communicate with the Imam in this period would be further refined by such later scholars as Ibn Bābawayh and, especially, al-Ṭūsī.[18] The latter, in particular, was also among those who also began formally differentiating between reliable and unreliable traditionists, a process as yet of less import to al-Kulaynī and his student al-Nuʿmānī.

Notes

1. On these individuals, see Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shīʿism* (Richmond, Surrey, 2000), especially p.195, and our discussion below. The reference is to Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1377/1957), vol.1, pp.333–343.

2. On the term *thiqa*, see Newman, *Formative Period*, p.61. n.6, citing Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiʿite*

Islam (Princeton, NJ, 1993), p.15, n.73, noting the term might refer to financial trustworthiness. Ayyūb b. Nūḥ (*The Formative Period*, especially pp.72, 88 n.24) was known to have been a financial agent of the Imams.

3. On these individuals see Newman, *Formative Period*, and our discussion below.

4. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol.1, 335/1, 338/9, 336/4, 337/5, 338/10, 338/7. See M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism*, tr. David Streight (Albany, NY, 1994), pp.108ff., 133ff., 136–137 and 137 n.711. In one of these traditions (341/23), Imam al-Bāqir said an Imam would disappear from the community in 260/874. In another, Imam Mūsā spoke of the (single) occultation as a test set by Allāh for the community (336/2).

5. Ibn Abī Zaynab, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmānī, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, Persian tr. M.J. Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1363/1985), pp.201–281. The chapter is entitled simply 'That which is related concerning the occultation of the twelfth expected Imam (*al-imām al-muntaẓar al-thānī ʿashar*).' 'Numbered' refers to the traditions assigned numbers by the editor; 'unnumbered' refers to those additional texts referred to by al-Nuʿmānī himself.

6. See Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī* (Qumm, 1407/1986), pp.383–384; Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt* (Iran, nd), vol.2, p.43; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, ed. M.T. al-Kashfī and A. Ismāʿīliyān (Qumm, 1390–92/1970–72), vol.6, pp.127–129.

7. Al-Nuʿmānī commenced the *isnād* with '*akhbaranā*' (he informed us) or '*ḥaddathanā*' (he told us), suggesting he had heard the tradition in question himself. Elsewhere, he named an individual and said '*akhbaranā*,' perhaps a suggestion that he had the tradition from a work composed by the individual named who narrated it from a third party. On these terms, see Fareed Y.Y. M. al-Muftāḥ, 'The Sources of al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*: An Analytical Study of the *Isnād*s in His Commentary on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* and *Sūrat al-Baqara*' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998), pp.111–112. All 105 traditions have *isnād*s which permit identification of the tradition's sources, if not always the precise manner in which it was obtained.

8. On al-Iskāfī, see Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (Najaf, 1937), p.141; al-Ardabīlī, vol.2, pp.212–213.

9. On al-Kulaynī, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, pp.377–378; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp.135–136; Newman, *Formative Period*, pp.45, 46 n.1.

10. On Ibn ʿUqda, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl,* pp.94–95; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist,* pp.28–29; al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (Najaf, 1380/1961), pp.441–442; al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt*, vol.1, pp.65–67. See also Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭāwūs and his Library* (Leiden, 1992) s.v.; Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾat al-Baḥrayn* (Beirut, 1406/1986), pp.431–434, citing Sunni sources on Ibn ʿUqda; al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-jannāt*, vol.1, pp.208–209.

11. On ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, see al-Najāshī, *Rijal*, pp.261–262; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p.93; al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt*, vol.1, pp.574–575. On al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ, see Newman, *Formative Period*, pp.19ff.

12. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt*, vol.1, p.522.

13. On these individuals, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl,* pp.7–13, 40–42, 132, 142–43, 216, 219–220, 222, 235–239, 330–332, 340, 446; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp.17–18, 46–47, 51–52, 61, 92–93, 102, 104–106, 109, 139–40, 155, 182; al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt*, vol.1, pp.9–11, 69–76, 221–226, 273–276, 284, 444–445, 473–478, 530, 569–572; vol.2, pp.203, 360–363.

14. On these individuals, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl,* pp.20, 83, 105, 170, 122, 245, 328, 332–333, 338, 341; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, pp.9, 36, 43, 72, 109, 143, 146, 147; al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl*, p.354; al-Ardabīlī, *Rijāl,* vol.1, pp.51–54, 74–75, 160–161, 339–340, 463–464; vol.2, pp.29, 60, 88–89, 108, 156–157, 392.

15. On this pact, reached between Allah and the Shīʿa at their creation, see Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, s.v.

16. See 249/1, al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol.1, pp.249/2, 250/5, 252/7, 340/19; cf. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide,* pp.111. n.599, 219–220.

17. On al-Sufyānī, see Newman, *The Formative Period*, pp.26, 201; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol.8, pp.224–225.

18. K. Yoshida has recently studied aspects of this process in her ʿA Formative Procedure of Ghaybah Theory in Twelver Shīʿism, an analysis of the *Kamāl al-dīn wa-tamām al-niʿmah* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq,' in Japanese (Ph.D. thesis, Department of Islamic Studies, Tokyo University, 1998).

7

Memory and Maps

Emilie Savage-Smith

Medieval Islamic maps depicting the entire inhabited world have attracted considerable attention from scholars. Though maps limited to specific regions are preserved today in far greater numbers than world maps and were produced as early as the 3rd/9th century, they have generally been given less attention. This essay will focus upon one particular type of regional map that accompanied early Arabic treatises on geography and will consider the underlying principles and purpose of its distinctive design.[1]

When approaching the topic of medieval maps, it is important that we do not assume the purpose of a map at that time to have been identical, or even similar, to what we today expect of a map.[2] The maps must be judged on their own terms, within the aesthetic context in which they were produced and in relation to their purpose which, it will be argued below, was as an aid to memory and a means of imposing order on new and complex material and *not* as a visual model of physical reality.

Consider the two examples illustrated in Figures 1 and 3. The maps of this school of cartography – known as the 'Balkhī School' – are characterized by very stylized line-work and extreme abstraction. Some have criticized the maps for being oversimplified, for

failing to indicate correct geographical positions, and for being 'primitive and naïve.'[3] It is evident, however, that the maps were viewed by the earliest exponents of this school as the central focus of the work, with the accompanying texts secondary to the illustrations.[4] Bearing this in mind, it is worth exploring what might have been the intended purpose of these illustrations that today appear to us perplexing if not outright inadequate in terms of modern concepts of mapmaking. I would suggest that the characteristics that have been deplored – distortion, lack of mathematical plotting, over-simplicity – were purposeful and intended on the part of the inventor and not due to ignorance or ineptness.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the maps in their historical context, let us look at their technical features. The two examples are reproduced from the Bodleian Library, Oriental Collections, MS. Ouseley 373, which the copyist completed in the month of Dhu'l-Qa'da 696/23 July-20 August 1297.[5] In Figures 2 and 4, I have changed the orientation of the maps so that North is at the top, a more familiar orientation for modern readers, and supplied English or transliterated labels.

It is immediately evident that the maps are composed for the most part of straight lines, simple angles (mostly of 45° and 90°), circles and circular arcs. The lakes, seas and waterways are shown with blue-grey opaque watercolours, the mountain ranges with blue shading to purple, and the cities are enclosed by red circles or polygonal outlines. There is only a minimum of surface detail.

The map of Syria (Figures 1 and 2) is bisected diagonally by a band indicating a series of mountain ranges running more or less together.[6] The north end is Jabal al-Lukkām, referring to the Anti-Taurus mountains of Anatolia, and the southernmost range are the Lebanon Mountains. In the northwest, two rivers, Baradān and Sayḥān, are shown arising in the Anti-Taurus mountains and emptying into the Mediterranean. A third river is depicted arising at a considerable distance north, passing through the mountains, and emptying into the Mediterranean. On this copy it is labelled Nahr Sayḥān instead of the more correct Nahr Jayḥān, reflecting a confusion of the two rivers that frequently occurred

amongst early writers.[7] The three rivers are shown as parallel bands intersecting the mountain range at right angles, more or less.

Along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean (drawn as a vertical) can be seen the names of coastal towns, beginning with Ascalon in the south and ending with Bayyās north of Alexandretta (Iskandarūn). The settlement of ʿArqā is indicated slightly inland and off the coastal route. The inland route from Gaza to al-Ramla to Tiberias (Ṭabariyya) is indicated by the line at 45° to the Mediterranean, continuing, on the other side of the mountains, on to Damascus, Baalbek and Homs.

At the bottom of the Red Sea two places are named: al-Qulzum, the ancient Clysma near modern Suez, and ʿAbbādān, which is no doubt an error for ʿAydhāb (a name occurring on other copies), a port now in ruins on the Red Sea in eastern Sudan, opposite Mecca and Medina. From the top of the Red Sea an arc with names of stops in the Syrian desert extends northward up to the Euphrates River. At the centre of the semicircular band representing the Euphrates, the bridge of boats across the river is indicated by the label Jisr Manbij. Ten armed fortresses forming the defences along the northern border with Byzantium are named on the map, with the phrase *al-thughūr al-jazīra* ('the Jazīran or Mesopotamian marches') written diagonally across the area between the Euphrates and Jayḥān rivers.[8]

At the northern edge of the Mediterranean (southern Anatolia), three cities are situated slightly inland from the coast itself: Maṣṣīṣa, Adana, and Ṭarsūs. On the western coast of the Mediterranean a settlement named *Awlās* is indicated. There is considerable uncertainty about its identification.[9] It is likely that the name Awlās refers to some now unidentified settlement near the river Lāmas, considered by early 3rd/9th and 4th/10th-century Arab writers to be the boundary between Byzantium and Islamic lands.[10]

The second map (Figures 3 and 4) shows the mountainous province of Jibāl in Iran, lying south of the Daylam mountains which are indicated by a crescent below the Caspian Sea. The Safīd River arises in the northwestern central Iranian plateau and its middle course borders the district of Ṭārum, shown here as a small

triangle in the west. Its tributaries, of which one is the Shāh River (also labelled on the map), converge and break through the Daylam mountains toward the Caspian Sea.

The map centres on Hamadān, from which five routes emanate: one northwest through Abhar to Zanjān, one north to Rayy, one southeast to Iṣfahān and its suburb Khān Lanjān, one south to Lūr,[11] and one southwest to Ḥulwān. The relative positions of the cities have been distorted; for example, Hamadān in reality lies west-south-west of what was once Rayy, and Ḥulwān due west of Hamadān and northwest of Andāmis. The resulting map does, however, show by connecting lines five routes out of Hamadān, but fails to indicate a sixth going to Shahrazūr through Dīnawar. In the case of the route from Ḥulwān east to Andāmis, the intervening stops of Ṭazar, Sīrawān and Ṣaymara have not been placed on the straight line connecting the two termini. The route from Rayy east to Simnān is indicated along the base of the mountain range, but the route Rayy – Qumm – Qāshān – Iṣfahān appears to pass through Simnān though it did not, and Ardistān is shown on the main route from Qāshān to Iṣfahān when in fact one had to deviate off the main route to reach it. On both maps, the circles (or polygonal shapes) representing the towns are evenly spaced along each line.

Rather than compare the maps of Syria and Jibāl (and the other related regional maps) with modern topographical maps of the regions, as has usually been done, it is more productive to compare them with something completely different: the now famous *London Underground Map*. The authors of a recent history of the *London Underground Map* have been careful to point out that this 'map' is not a map in the modern technical sense (a mathematically accurate representation of physical space) but is more appropriately called a 'diagram,' and so perhaps historians should call the 'maps' of the Balkhī school 'diagrams' rather than maps.[12] However, I have chosen to continue to use the term 'map' because current historians of cartography are convincingly arguing for a much broader definition of 'map.'[13] Furthermore, the term map is universally used by the general population of London, who immediately took to the new design as a remarkably simple and

understandable means of making their way about on the Underground System.

More to the point, however, is the principle employed by the designer of the *London Underground Map*, H.C. Beck. In his map, distortion was purposeful and not a result of ineptness. The routes were simplified to verticals, horizontals or diagonals, and all surface detail was eliminated except for a band representing the River Thames, which was stylized in the same way as the routes. In equalizing the distances between stops, they were compressed or expanded as need be, and directional orientation altered if required. The stops themselves were indicated by rings all of the same size. Though Beck's design was initially rejected as being too 'revolutionary' and not truly a map, it became an immediate and continuing success with the travelling public after its first printing in 1933.[14]

One must beware of replacing one anachronism (requiring maps to be mathematical models of reality) with another (applying the principles of Beck's *London Underground Map*). Nonetheless, while I do not suggest an influence or a line of development, it is illuminating to compare them. Similar motivations and solutions can arise at vastly different times and places. Perhaps the Muslim creators of these maps intentionally decided not to employ coordinates or even approximations of actual positions but rather chose to simplify the presentation of material through the use of a schematic treatment primarily employing circles, and horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines, in order to provide an easily remembered way of sorting and remembering complex information.

The maps here illustrated are taken from a set of 21 maps forming the first version of the treatise *al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik* by al-Iṣṭakhrī, representing the earliest preserved examples of the Balkhī School of mapmaking.[15] This type of map, distinct in concept and design, can be traced back to the scholar Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhī, who died in 322/934 and after whom the cartographic 'school' was named.[16] He spent most of his working life in Iraq, particularly in Baghdad, though he was born in Balkh in northeastern medieval Iran and returned there at the end of his life. The precise nature of his geographical writing is a

subject of speculation, for none of it is directly preserved today. It seems, however, that he composed a commentary entitled *Ṣuwar al-aqālīm* ('Illustrations of the Climes') on a set of maps. Whether al-Balkhī devised the maps himself or whether they were the product of an earlier scholar is unknown.[17] Though neither his geographical treatise nor the maps that accompanied it survive today, the treatises of three other 4th/10th-century geographers (whose works do survive) are derivative from his treatise, and together they form the 'Balkhī School of Geographers.'

Of the three later figures representing the work of al-Balkhī, the earliest, al-Iṣṭakhrī, is the most important for our understanding the maps that al-Balkhī was presenting, since the earliest version of his treatise (*al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik*) appears to have been based directly upon the treatise of al-Balkhī with relatively little elaboration. Al-Iṣṭakhrī's treatise proved very popular, for a number of abridgements and translations into Persian were subsequently produced.[18]

Virtually nothing is known of al-Iṣṭakhrī's life, except that he met the second scholar preserving the Balkhī approach to mapmaking, Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988). This fact is known from Ibn Ḥawqal's treatise *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, which includes much biographical information about its author.[19] Ibn Ḥawqal did a considerable amount of travelling between 331/943 and 362/973, visiting Spain, North Africa, Sicily, Egypt, and large portions of Iran and Turkestan, in addition to his native area of al-Jazīra.

Even in the 4th/10th century it seems that there was confusion regarding what constituted the work of al-Balkhī as distinct from that of al-Iṣṭakhrī or Ibn Ḥawqal, and this confusion has persisted throughout modern scholarship as well. Recent research suggests the following relationships between texts (and, one assumes, maps as well).[20] According to a statement by al-Iṣṭakhrī, shortly before 309/921 al-Balkhī completed his commentary on a set of maps comprising seventeen regional maps, three maps of seas (the Mediterranean, the Persian Sea/Indian Ocean, and the Caspian Sea), and one world map. Between 318/930 and 321/933, an enlarged commentary to these same maps was prepared

by al-Iṣṭakhrī. Then in 340/951 al-Iṣṭakhrī composed a second, slightly expanded, version of his own commentary.

After al-Iṣṭakhrī had completed his second version he met Ibn Ḥawqal, whom he asked to undertake a revision of the text (with maps). In fact, Ibn Ḥawqal prepared three versions of what was initially intended as a revision of al-Iṣṭakhrī but which introduced extensive accounts of his own life and travels. The first was written about 350/961 for the Ḥamdānid patron Sayf al-Dawla (d.356/967) in Syria, the second between 360/971 and 367/977 for a Fatimid patron, and a final version composed in 378/988. Ibn Ḥawqal's treatise is notable for expanded sections on Spain, North Africa and Sicily, and more details regarding Egypt and Syria.

Of the third figure in the Balkhī school, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī (d.ca. 390/1000), little is known except that he was in Mecca in 356/966 and his name suggests some association with Jerusalem. The treatise by al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi maʿrifat al-aqālīm,* is extant in two closely related versions, one prepared for a Sāmānid patron and the other for a Fatimid readership in Egypt.[21] Although the general form of the treatise and the accompanying maps is the same as earlier representatives of the Balkhī School, there are substantial differences between al-Muqaddasī's work and that of his predecessors.

Space does not allow a detailed comparison of the maps in the first version of al-Iṣṭakhrī with those in his second version nor with those in the subsequent versions of Ibn Ḥawqal and al-Muqaddasī. When they are compared, however, it is evident that the lines soften, the delineation becomes sketchier and vaguer, and decorative devices are introduced. In the case of the maps for the Mediterranean and Egypt, Ibn Ḥawqal did introduce some new features, such as adding peninsulas for Italy and Greece and delineating some tributaries of the Nile Delta. Yet in doing so, the simplicity of the original was lost and nothing gained in terms of utility.[22] In the maps accompanying al-Muqaddasī's text, in addition to the vaguer outlines, some places are omitted or moved, extraneous forms are occasionally introduced, and the text

becomes more voluminous and dominates over the illustrations.[23] For example, on his map of Syria, al-Muqaddasī omits most of what is north of Latakia and Aleppo, and the overall impression of the map is rather different from that of the Balkhī-Iṣṭakhrī version. I would suggest that while the changes observable through subsequent versions may initially appear as a progression towards greater realism through the introduction of non-rectilinear outlines and some adjustments for relative size, they in fact distract from the stark simplicity of the original model without substantially increasing accuracy.[24] It is possible that Ibn Ḥawqal viewed the map as serving a slightly different purpose from that originally conceived by al-Balkhī and al-Iṣṭakhrī, and that al-Muqaddasī's notion of a map diverged yet further. Perhaps the later geographers did not fully appreciate the role of simplified lines, circles, verticals, horizontals and diagonals as mnemonic aids.

Latitudes and longitudes could have been used to plot more accurately the positions of cities had the designer of the Balkhī maps been so inclined. The idea of using longitude and latitude for localities was well-known in the Islamic world through several early Arabic translations of Ptolemy's *Geography*. One of the translations of Ptolemy's treatise (*Kitāb Jughrāfiyā fi'l-maʿmūr wa-ṣifat al-arḍ*) was made for the use of Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī, the teacher of al-Balkhī, and consequently was probably available to al-Balkhī.[25] Moreover, Muslim astronomers such as al-Khwārazmī (d.ca. 232/847) and al-Battānī (d.317/919), prepared geographical tables, and most astronomical handbooks contained tables of geographical coordinates.[26] Yet the maker of these early maps chose not to use such data. This was not a matter of ignorance, I would suggest, but of a quite different purpose motivating the construction of the maps.

Also to be noted is the fact that the maps of the Balkhī School covered only the Islamic empire and were not concerned with non-Muslim territories. Moreover, al-Balkhī, al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal all used the term *iqlīm* (plural, *aqālīm*), usually translated as 'clime' or 'climate,' in the sense of a region determined by political boundaries. Only al-Muqaddasī, in a section on astronomical geography, used it in the additional sense of a zone

of the inhabited world defined by the length of the longest day of the year. This latter definition, inherited from the writings of Ptolemy, was the usual one, but it is highly significant that the early representatives of the Balkhī School defined their regional maps by political boundaries rather than by the astronomically defined seven climes.[27] One motivation for the maps can be seen as an attempt to define *dār al-Islām* and impose order (and, with that, authority) over lands subsumed under Islamic administration.

That al-Balkhī purposely undertook a different form of mapping is further supported by the fact that there was already available within the Islamic world, prior to al-Balkhī, a series of maps commonly referred to as the *ṣūra Ma'mūniyya* which were mentioned by al-Masʿūdī (d.345/956) as existing at the time of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (reg. 198–218/813–833).[28] The few remnants that are still preserved of these early maps show that they did not use straight lines, arcs of circles and one or two angles, and thus suggest that al-Balkhī purposely chose not to follow the existing method, presumably because he had a different purpose in mind.[29]

The early maps of the Balkhī School can be interpreted as incorporating an early form of illustrated itinerary list, showing the stages in a journey or pilgrimage. And indeed the texts that accompany them include lists of various routes by which a locale can be reached, with the distances between towns specified in terms of the number of days travel required. In this, the early Balkhī maps and associated texts may reflect an influence from the lists of Islamic pilgrimage and postal stages compiled originally for administrative purposes and usually circulating under the title *al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* (routes and provinces) – a title that, perhaps significantly, was taken by al-Iṣṭakhrī for his commentary.[30] At that time progress in travelling was not made by reading a map, but rather by enquiring where the next stage on the journey was located and by hiring local guides. For this purpose, the maps of al-Balkhī, as represented by al-Iṣṭakhrī, provided the basic information in a visual format and could serve as route-finders accompanying the itinerary lists in the text itself.

Itinerary lists (unaccompanied by a 'map' or diagram) have

had a long history, of course. In the later Roman empire such lists, giving the mileage between successive stages, were employed for military and civil purposes. Following the official recognition of Christianity in 313 AD, there was a market for itineraries to Christian shrines, particularly for the Bordeaux to Jerusalem pilgrimage. A number of the latter itineraries are preserved today, as well as one for a journey from the Levant through Asia Minor to Tarsus and terminating in Tyre. Other route lists from late antiquity focused on sea journeys, recording distances between harbours around the eastern Mediterranean and North African coasts.[31]

A remarkable late-12th or early-13th-century Latin manuscript, called the Peutinger map after its one-time owner, provides evidence that at least one attempt was made in Roman times to illustrate such itinerary lists. This long, narrow vellum manuscript, measuring originally about 6.75 meters in length (or width) but only 34 cm in height, is a copy of an Roman archetype made between the years 335 and 366 AD, which in turn may have been based on a late first-century prototype.[32] The elongated map depicts the main roads of the Roman empire, with the distances between stops along a route given in terms of Roman miles. There has been purposeful directional distortion, with the north-south axis greatly shortened and the east-west exaggerated – possibly reflecting the shape and dimensions of the papyrus scroll on which the prototype was drawn. The Mediterranean, Aegean and Black seas are deformed into ribbons with scalloped edges. The compression and stretching has resulted in the relative positions of the various stages along a route in many instances being at great variance with reality.

While the spatial relationships on the Peutinger map have been deliberately distorted, the deformation is of a very different sort from that on the early Balkhī maps. In the latter, the distances between localities have been made uniform while the general placement is roughly along verticals, horizontals, diagonals and arcs of circles. There are other differences as well, for the Balkhī maps do not provide mileage or other indications of distances, and the cities are indicated simply by circles or regular polygons. On the Peutinger map small buildings, towers, or other symbols

indicate the towns, granaries and spas, with the exception of three cities (Antioch, Constantinople and Rome) that are represented by personifications.

Also from the 13th century we have the first evidence of medieval European itinerary maps. Matthew Paris (d.1259) was a historian at St Albans who experimented with various cartographic forms. Four copies are preserved today of his strip-map showing a journey, city by city, from London to Otranto in Apulia (southern Italy) and from there on to Acre, the major Frankish stronghold in the Crusader states at the time he was working. These itineraries, as well as a map of Britain (also extant in four copies), illustrated his *Chronica majora* and *Historia Anglorum*.[33] While his itinerary maps, drawn in vertical columns, do have straight lines (or, more precisely, bands) connecting the stops en route, and alternative routes are also indicated, the cities are not set out along one continuous straight line nor are the itineraries set within a larger regional framework. Moreover, a castle or other building, as well as name, indicate each stop, and there are pictorial vignettes and extensive legends, all noticeably lacking from the Islamic maps. Although not strictly itinerary maps in the sense of his London-to-Acre strip-maps, Matthew Paris's maps of Britain placed Dover prominently at the bottom and focused on the route from Dover north to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Although a vertical axis dominates Matthew Paris's 13th-century diagrams, and the layouts do have a geometric structure that overrides the actual relative positions of localities, he does not employ straight lines and 45° and 90° degree angles, as on the regional maps of Iṣṭakhrī. In general, the dissimilarities with the Muslim maps are greater than the similarities.

Comparison with other medieval European maps discloses fundamental differences. The Balkhī/Iṣṭakhrī maps are far more geometric in structure and basic lay-out than comparable European maps. This is not to say that geometry was in any way involved in the plotting and construction of the map other than in the use of a straight edge and drawing compass. On the Balkhī/Iṣṭakhrī maps the space is used homogeneously – that is, no one area of a

map is endowed with special significance – which contrasts with the European centring of a map on Jerusalem or Rome.

In contrast to medieval European maps that depicted heaven and hell and showed lands populated by fabulous beasts and semi-human creatures, the early Muslim maps were not drawn for entertainment or contemplation. The European maps had extensive, often fabulous, legends written on them – features noticeably lacking on the maps of the Balkhī School. Moreover, relatively few regional maps survive from medieval Europe (if indeed many were produced before Matthew Paris), reinforcing the impression of a very different cartographic method and purpose than is apparent in the Muslim sources. The early Muslim maps are notable for their stark simplicity, lack of surface detail and a minimalist approach to labelling – features conducive to memorization. The European *mappae mundi,* on the other hand, were crammed with tiny illustrations, and even though their tripartite construction brought a simplification to the conceptualization of the world at large, the three continents are filled with a confusion of curving lines, animals, humans, buildings and vegetation that was virtually impossible to remember.

In medieval Europe, maps very seldom accompanied geographical texts, and it has been suggested by some historians that in Europe at that time, text was valued over the visual to such an extent that maps would be considered superfluous.[34] For Muslim thinkers of the 4th/10th century and later, this was manifestly not the case, for geographical texts were highly illustrated. The maps are not superfluous or redundant when placed alongside the text, but rather were the focus around which the text was structured. They simplified and organized the information provided by the text into an easily memorized scheme with a minimum of distracting material. The same can be said for Beck's much-acclaimed *London Underground Map.*

The distribution of names in cells along straight lines found on the early Muslim maps was an *aide-mémoire* for recollecting an ordered series of ideas. In this respect, they are reminiscent of the drawings and imagery employed in what was called the 'Art of Memory' (*ars memoriae* or *ars memorandi*) in early-modern Europe.

The latter, however, usually utilized images of one genre, such as city streets or symbolic animals or parts of the human body, to remember ordered terms or concepts concerned with another subject matter, such as a series of arguments or parts of speech. There would appear to be no direct connection or influence between the 4th/10th-century diagrams of Muslim mapmakers and the later European drawings of the *ars memorandi,* although in the maps of the early Balkhī School, the cognitive processes are aided by the visual imagery just as they were in the later *ars memoriae* diagrams.[35]

The role of these diagrammatic maps, it has been suggested here, was as an aid to memory, allowing the reader to recall the trade and pilgrimage routes. They assisted in organizing information about the disparate lands recently coming under the domain of Islam, making complex and confusing material appear comprehensible and manageable.[36] The pilgrimage and caravan routes appear more achievable and inviting to the prospective traveller when represented by straight lines, and the encircled lists of stops along the way aided the reader in organizing and recalling the necessary information.

To return to the *London Underground Map*, design historian Adrian Forty commented that Beck's Underground diagram 'made those outlying stations seem relatively close to the centre of London. The prospect of making a journey to Cockfosters or Ruislip, if one had looked at a geographically correct map, would have seemed rather formidable. Looking at the Underground map, it looks reasonably simple.'[37] The same argument can be made about the maps of the early Balkhī School.

In summary, these 4th/10th-century 'maps' of the Muslim world were not a reflection of, or derivative from, Greek or Roman models, nor did they mirror the cartographic conventions of medieval Europe. They were something different. The 'maps' of the Balkhī School were more diagrams than maps, and as such were more useful for memory and organization of material than would have been the case were they models of physical reality. If the primary intention was mnemonic and organizational, then the stark geometric simplicity of the earliest versions was an

affective and ingenious method of achieving that end – a purpose that was gradually overlooked as the maps were copied and incorporated into subsequent treatises, where wiggly lines and superfluous details detracted from their impact as easily remembered route-finders.

Notes

1. It is hoped that this brief excursion into maps as aids to memory and learning will be an appropriate offering to the honorand of this volume, whose learning and friendship have been of special value to me over many years. I wish to thank Peregrine Horden and M.B. Smith for their most helpful suggestions on drafts of this essay. They are, of course, not responsible for any errors of interpretation or documentation.

2. In a recent volume on medieval Islamic cartography, the editors (urging a new approach to the history of cartography) lament that in the past 'pride of place was given to the history of mathematically constructed – 'scientific' – maps, so that the history of maps could culminate in the 'scale' maps of the modern age and fit the notion of 'progress' from a primitive past to a state of modern enlightenment'; see J.B. Harley and David Woodward, ed. *The History of Cartography*, vol.2*, Book One: Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago, 1992) p.xix.

3. David A. King, *World-Maps for Finding the Direction and Distance to Mecca*: *Innovation and Tradition in Islamic Science* (London and Leiden, 1999), p.37. Fuat Sezgin does not include the maps of the Balkhī school of geographers in his recent three-volume study, *Mathematische Geographie und Kartographie im Islam und ihr Fortleben im Abendland* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 2000). For a discussion of the problem of inaccuracy and distortion on medieval European world maps (which took a very different form from the maps under discussion here), see John Kirtland Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades: A Study in the History of Medieval Science and Tradition in Western Europe* (New York, 1925; repr. 1965) pp.247–254; Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed their World* (London, 1997), pp.13–14; and J.B. Harley and David Woodward, ed. *The History of Cartography*, vol.1: *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, 1987), pp.504–506.

4. See G.R. Tibbetts, 'The Balkhī School of Geographers,' in Harley

and Woodward, ed. *History of Cartography*, vol.2, pp.108–136, especially pp.112–3.

5. Tibbetts, 'The Balkhī School,' p.132, no.27, gives the date of this copy as AH 670 [= AD 1272], repeating the date given incorrectly by E. Sachau and Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindūstānī and Pushtū Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Part I: The Persian Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1899), col. 397 entry 396. The text in MS. Ouseley 373 is, according to the colophon, an autograph copy of a Persian translation made by one Muḥammad b. As'ad b. 'Abdallāh known as al-Ḥabaṭī. According to a note written on the first folio, the manuscript was acquired by Sir William Ouseley in Shīrāz in 1811; consequently, it cannot be the manuscript on which Ouseley based his translation and study of a Persian version of this same treatise, *The Oriental Geography of Ebn Haukal, an Arabic Traveller of the Tenth Century* (London, 1800). Sir William stated in his printed translation that for his version of 'Ibn Haukal' he employed two Persian manuscripts, one in his own possession and an unillustrated one at Eton College which he designated Eton Oriental MS. 418. The Eton manuscript is now on deposit at Cambridge University Library, MS. Pote (Eton) 4.7. The author wishes to thank Mark Muehlhaeusler of Cambridge University Library for supplying information about this manuscript, which in recent secondary literature has been listed as present location unknown. The location of the incomplete and undated copy in Sir William's possession at the time he did the translation is unknown.

6. For the identification of most (but not all) of the place names occurring on these maps, see Georgette Cornu, *Atlas du monde arabo-islamique a l'époque classique ix^e-x^e siècles* (Leiden, 1985), and Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905).

7. Byzantine as well as early Arabic writers often confused the two rivers, which may at one time have had a common mouth. See E. Honigmann, 'Maṣṣīṣa,' *EI2*, vol.6, p.778.

8. M. Bonner, 'The Naming of the Frontier: *'awāṣim, thughūr,* and the Arab Geographers,' *BSOAS,* 57 (1994), pp.17–24; C.E. Bosworth and J.D. Latham, 'al-Thughūr,' *EI2*, vol.10, pp.446–449.

9. Neither Cornu, *Atlas du monde arabo-islamique*, nor Konrad Miller, *Mappae arabicae: Arabische Welt- und Länderkarten des 9.-13. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1926–31), attempt identifications or even discuss it. Medieval discussions are quite confused; see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1886–73), vol.1, pp.388, 407 and 927, vol.2, p.864, and vol.4, p.166; and al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik,* ed. Muḥammad

Jābir ʿAbd al-ʿĀl al-Ḥīnī (Cairo, 1961), pp.47 and 49–50. Bosworth and Latham, 'al-Thughūr,' p.447, identify Awlās with Eleusa.

10. X. de Planhol and Cl. Huart, 'Lamas-ṣū,' *EI2*, vol.5, p.647; and Le Strange, *Lands*, p.133.

11. For Lūr, see V. Minorsky, 'Lur,' *EI2*, vol.5, pp.821–826.

12. K. Garland, *Mr Beck's Underground Map* (Harrow Weald, Middlesex, 1994), p.2.

13. For example, Professor David Woodward and the late J.B. Harley have argued that for a proper understanding of the history of cartography a much broader definition of 'map' must be adopted than the current modern one of a mathematically generated representation of a physical surface. They suggest that maps are 'graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world'; Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol.2, bk. 1, p.xix.

14. See Garland, *Mr Beck's Underground Map*, for a detailed study of the design and history of Beck's 'map.' When the map was first printed in 1933, outline diamonds replaced rings at interchange stations.

15. The illustrations in the Bodleian manuscript have not previously been published. The manuscript was unknown to Miller, who lists ten copies of the map of Syria; of these, four are Arabic copies and four are Persian copies of al-Iṣṭakhrī, one is illustrating al-Muqadassī, and one a much later derivative map. For Jibāl, Miller lists 15 copies, five of which are Arabic versions of al-Iṣṭakhrī, five Persian versions, one is from Ibn Ḥawqal, two from al-Muqadassī, and two later derivative maps. For Syria, see Miller, *Mappae arabicae,* III, 1, pp.23–26 no.V, and III, 3, no.V, plates 11. and 12; and for Jibāl, see IV, 2, pp.63–66 no.XIV, and IV, 1, no.XIV, plates 40–42. For a more recent listing of extant manuscripts (but not individual maps), see Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' pp.130–135.

16. See D.M. Dunlop, 'al-Balkhī,' *EI2*, vol.1, p.1003.

17. Some have suggested, following an alternative reading in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, that the maps upon which al-Balkhī was commenting were devised by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Khāzin. However, there are problems with this attribution, not the least being that al-Khāzin died in either 350/961 or 360/971, some thirty to forty years after al-Balkhī. See Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' p.109 and note 9.

18. No systematic comparison and analysis has been undertaken of the maps in the 33 illustrated copies of al-Iṣṭakhrī's treatise known to be preserved today. The best studies to date are by Tibbetts and the still

useful (though somewhat confused) study by Konrad Miller, *Mappae arabicae.* The earliest edition of the Arabic, that by J.H. Möller, *Liber climatum* (Gotha, 1839), reproduced the maps from a manuscript in Gotha (MS. Orient. A.1521, dated 569/1173). No maps are reproduced in the edition by M.J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum,* vol.1. (Leiden, 1870). The edition by Muḥammad Jābir ʿAbd al-ʿĀl al-Ḥīnī (Cairo, 1961) reproduces in black-and-white18 maps from one of the three Cairo copies that he employed in the edition, though which one is not specified (possibly Dār al-Kutub, *jughrāfiyā* 256), while the edition by Īraj Afshār (Tehran, 1961) of a Persian version reproduces in colour (rather poor reproduction) 20 maps from a manuscript in Tehran (Mūza-i Īrān-i Bāstān MS. 3515) and black-and-white prints of two maps from Viennese (MS. Mixt. 344/Ar.1271) and Istanbul (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, MS. 3156) manuscripts.

19. Nine manuscripts are known to contain versions of his treatise, five of which have maps. No maps were included in the edition by M.J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum,* vol.2 (Leiden, 1873). The text was re-edited by J.H. Kramers (Leiden, 1938) and included line drawings based on maps in Istanbul, Topkapi Saray, MS. 3346. The same line drawings are reproduced in the French translation, with separate drawings keyed to the translation; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Configuration de la terre* (*Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*), tr. J.H. Kramers and G. Wiet (Paris and Beirut, 1964).

20. See Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' pp.110–114; M.J. de Goeje, 'Die Istakhrī-Balkhī Frage,' *ZDMG,* 25 (1871), pp.42–58; and J.H. Kramers, 'Le question Balkhī-Iṣṭakhrī-Ibn Ḥawḳal et l'Atlas de l'Islam,' *Acta Orientalia,* 10 (1932), pp.9–30. Konrad Miller assigns the maps in four copies of al-Iṣṭakhrī's treatise to al-Balkhī himself, though the evidence for this attribution is not supplied; see Miller, *Mappae arabicae,* vol.1, pp.1,17.

21. Only four manuscript copies are extant of his treatise, of which three are illustrated with 15 or 19 maps. No maps were included in the edition by M.J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum,* vol.3 (Leiden, 1877). Nor were any maps included in the partial edition and translation by G.S.A. Ranking and R.F. Azoo (Calcutta, 1897–1910). The partial French translation by André Miquel, *Aḥsan at-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm: La meilleure répartition pour la connaissance des provinces* (Damascus, 1963) has five line drawings with transliterated labels, taken from Miller's *Mappae arabicae* and based on the Leiden copy and one of the two Berlin copies. A recent English translation reproduces photographically 19 maps from one of the Berlin copies (MS. Sprenger 5, Ahlwardt

no.6034) and one map from an Istanbul copy (Aya Sofia MS. 2971) in addition to line drawings with English or transliterated keys based on the diagrams printed earlier by Miller; al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions: A Translation of Ahsan al-Taqasim fī Maʿrifat al-Aqalim*, tr. Basil Anthony Collins, reviewed by Muhammad Hamid al-Tai (Reading, 1994).

22. A comparison of the basic outlines of the maps for the Mediterranean and for Egypt was published by Kramers, 'Le question Balkhī-Iṣṭakhrī-Ibn Ḥawḳal,' and repeated by Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' pp.120–121.

23. For comparative illustrations of the map of Arabia, see Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' pp.117–119 and 121–124.

24. This is in contrast to the view expressed by S. Maqbul Ahmad: 'A glance at the maps of Ibn Ḥawḳal shows that they are superior to those of al-Iṣṭakhrī' ('Kharīṭa,' *EI2*, vol.4, p.1079.

25. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* ed. Gustav Flügel (Leipzig, 1871–72), vol.1, p.268; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, 'Introduction to Islamic Maps,' in Harley and Woodward, ed. *History of Cartography,* vol.2, bk.1, p.10.

26. For tables of geographical coordinates, see E.S. and M.H. Kennedy, *Geographical Coordinates of Localities from Islamic Sources* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1987); Sezgin, *Mathematische Geographie*, vol.2, pp.592–594; and G.R. Tibbetts, 'The Beginnings of a Cartographic Tradition,' in Harley and Woodward, ed. *History of Cartography*, vol.2, bk. 1, pp.90–107, especially pp.96–101. For gazetteers and geographical data associated with determining the *qibla*, see King, *World-Maps*, pp.456–621.

27. See R.W. Brauer, 'Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography,' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 85 (1995), pt. 6, pp.1–73, and Yāqūt, *The Introductory Chapters of Yāqūt's Muʿjam al-buldān*, tr. Wadie Jwaideh (Leiden, 1987), pp.38–43.

28. See Sezgin, *Mathematische Geographie*, vol.1, pp.73–140, and illustrations in vol.3, pp.2–10. See also Tibbetts, 'Beginnings of a Cartographic Tradition,' pp.95–96.

29. Sezgin, *Mathematische Geographie*, vol.1, pp.130–131, has noted that Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhī and his followers deviated from, or rejected, the cartographical techniques evident in the Ma'mūn maps, and he suggests (following J.H. Kramers) that perhaps they represent an older Iranian tradition; see also Tibbetts, 'Balkhī School,' pp.114–115. It is also possible, however, as here suggested, that al-Balkhī was not reflecting some now lost and otherwise unknown Iranian atlas but rather was conceiving a 'map' in a quite different way.

30. See Tibbetts, 'Beginnings of a Cartographic Tradition,' pp.91–93.

31. See O.A.W. Dilke, 'Itineraries and Geographical Maps in the Early and Late Roman Empires,' in Harley and Woodward, ed. *History of Cartography*, vol.1, pp.234–257.

32. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS. Lat. 324. See E. Weber, ed. *Tabula Peutingeriana: Codex Vindobonensis 324* (Graz, 1976); Kai Brodersen, 'The Presentation of Geographical Knowledge for Travel and Transport in the Roman World: *itineria non tantum adnotata sed etiam picta,*' in C. Adams and R. Laurence, ed. *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (London, 2001), pp.7–21.

33. Suzanne Lewis, 'The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora,' *California Studies in the History of Art*, 21 (1987), pp.321–365; Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, pp.118–125.

34. P.E.A. Harvey, *Medieval Maps* (London, 1991), pp.7–9. See also Edson, *Mapping Time and Space,* pp.100–102.

35. See Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1969); and Claire R. Sherman, *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Seattle, 2000).

36. J.B. Harley and D. Woodward, *History of Cartography,* vol.2, bk. 1, p.514, have argued that maps of the Balkhī School were 'part of a religiously motivated trend toward Islamization as much as an attempt to better reflect geographical reality.' I would suggest that the earliest mapmakers, as reflected in al-Iṣṭakhrī's maps, had little or no concern for reflecting geographical reality but rather saw maps as serving quite a different purpose.

37. Garland, *Mr Beck's Underground Map,* p.7 n.1.

8

Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī: A Sunni Voice in the Shiʿi Century

Wadād al-Qāḍī

There are many contradictory aspects of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī's life and work that make him one of the most intriguing characters in the history of classical Arabic literature and early Islamic thought.[1] Born about 314/926 probably in Baghdad to a poor family, he took to the ascetic way of Sufi groups early in life, and yet strove strenuously to attain fame and wealth throughout his adult life at patrons' courts, only to achieve neither and to die in 414/1023 as a poor, lonely Sufi in exile, incapable of communicating with anyone but God. A deeply committed student of the Arabic and Islamic sciences, he suddenly took up the study of philosophy for well over a decade from 361/971, only to revert later to the peace of the religious and linguistic studies of Islam and Arabic. A copyist, *warrāq*, by profession, he disliked this work so much that he spent much of his life trying to get out of it – but with little success, if any at all. A prolific compiler whose pride rested solely in his books, he burned those books in a moment of despair after the onslaught of old age in the year 400/1009 and yet almost immediately thereafter wrote a penetratingly lucid letter explaining the reasons for his so doing. A most accomplished

prose writer – perhaps the most versatile and aesthetically complex artist of classical Arabic literature – only few of his contemporaries acknowledged his talent, and it took the historians of literature two whole centuries to write down his biography and cite excerpts from his works.

Tawḥīdī scholars have, over the past five decades, tried to offer various explanations for these and other puzzling aspects of al-Tawḥīdī's career, all of them agreeing that, in spite of great literary achievement, his life was, by his own admission, a series of tragic failures. Some attributed those failures to his own personal flaws: his natural quickness to spot people's faults, coupled with his innate inability to halt his sharp tongue from lampooning, blaming or exposing those faults – that made people avoid him; or his stiffness of character, lack of diplomatic skills, weakness of polish in social skills, coupled with shabbiness in appearance – that made him unsuitable for adorning patrons' courts and unpalatable for their pompous tastes. Other scholars were more charitable and took into account al-Tawḥīdī's milieu. They noted that, whereas indeed there was a huge gap between his behaviour and the behaviour demanded by the society in which he lived, this gap was not caused only by his character-related shortcomings but also by a value system to which he held firmly and which his society seemed not to endorse, and by a set of beliefs which, for him, were non-negotiable, but which the realities of the time had invalidated.

As I have discussed elsewhere, al-Tawḥīdī's system rests on three fundamental values: religion, learning and morality, to which must be added the additional, yet basic, value of reason.[2] The system which his society adopted, on the other hand, had, according to him, none of those values. As described by him, the times in the 4th/10th century were witnessing a frightening intellectual and moral decline: religion, piety and morality were in shambles; the rulers were unjust, ungracious, impious, vile, corrupt, insensitive and, above all, miserly and disinterested in learning; and the new mores made it irrelevant for one to be pious and morally upright: what mattered was whether or not one was light-hearted, handsome, graceful, polished, elegant, flippant, skilful at playing chess and backgammon, and how good he was at saving money,

accumulating more of it, and parting with as little of it as possible.[3] The situation on the level of beliefs was just as gloomy for al-Tawḥīdī. Whereas he believed in – and demanded – the strictly correct usage of Arabic language, many of his contemporaries either did not know or did not care to use good Arabic; and whereas he held in the highest esteem – and actually emulated in his own writing – the free and well-knit style of al-Jāḥiẓ (d.255/863), the prose writers of his days preferred to write in stylized and artificial rhymed prose. Above all, whereas he was a strict Sunni in word and thought, the times were, for the first time in Islamic history, witnessing an unanticipated ascendancy in Shiʿism in the heart of the Islamic lands where he lived, and that in the form of the rise of the Būyids to the de facto headship of the Islamic state. It is therefore within this framework that one should understand al-Tawḥīdī's attitude towards Shiʿism. In what follows, I plan to discuss this attitude in three spheres, the historical, theological and experiential, then to place it in the context of al-Tawḥīdī's relation to his time in concluding observations.

The Historical Sphere

Al-Tawḥīdī's vision of the crucial events of early Islamic history shaped to a great extent his vision of Shiʿism, particularly the question of the succession to the Prophet Muḥammad (i.e., the caliphate), the killing of ʿUthmān, the events at Ṣiffīn, the accession of the Umayyads to the caliphate, and the killing of al-Ḥusayn.

In keeping with the general Sunni view, al-Tawḥīdī believed that the Prophet did not appoint ʿAlī as his successor. Thus, in one place, he narrates the saying attributed to ʿAlī's son, ʿUmar, in which he says, 'We did not hear about the appointment/testament (*waṣiyya*) until we went to Iraq;'[4] and in another, after recording the well-known saying of ʿĀ'isha, 'The Prophet died between my breast and my throat (*bayna saḥrī wa-naḥrī*), so when did he appoint him?,' he comments, 'As if she meant by that ʿAlī.'[5] In a lengthy and rather unique analysis of this issue, he relates, citing no particular authority, that when the Prophet was on his deathbed, al-ʿAbbās, Muḥammad's and ʿAlī's uncle, suggested to

ʿAlī that they ask the Prophet about 'this matter' (*hādha'l-amr*), i.e., about whom he wished to succeed him in the leadership of the community. ʿAlī refused. Later, the Companion al-Qaʿqāʿ b. ʿAmr asked ʿAlī why he had refused. ʿAlī's answer was not uncalculating in al-Tawḥīdī's text; he said, 'Because, if we asked him and he appointed [a person] not from us, it [i.e., the imamate] would never revert to us. So I wished to remain silent: if he [independently] gave us the successorship, then this would be what we want; but if he gave it to other than us, our hope to attain it [at some point in the future] would remain extended, and neither we nor the people would be severed from that hope.' According to al-Qaʿqāʿ, the result of this major difference of opinion between ʿAlī and his uncle al-ʿAbbās was that the people [supporting the right of the Prophet's family to the imamate] were split into two camps, one siding with and paying allegiance to al-ʿAbbās and the other doing the same to ʿAlī[6] – as if foreshadowing the split in the ranks of the Shiʿis when the Abbasids actually seized power just over a century later.

Al-Tawḥīdī's vision of the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, is typically Sunni. For one thing, he believed that the decision of the assembly at the Saqīfa to elect Abū Bakr in 11/632 to the successorship to the Prophet was legitimate and sound, and that it was wrong of the Anṣār to suggest rotation/duality in the headship of the community; in fact, in al-Tawḥīdī's text, it was ʿAlī who said that suggestion was wrong.[7] For another, and much more significantly, al-Tawḥīdī is deeply convinced that it was blatantly wrong of ʿAlī not to immediately give his oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr. This position he makes crystal clear in his famous treatise *Risālat al-Saqīfa*,[8] a relatively long essay which he himself wrote, attributing it, complete with a chain of transmission, to authorities contemporaneous with the events of the Saqīfa, but failing to hide its late, 4th/10th century composition and its peculiarly al-Tawḥīdian style. In this treatise, we have four protagonists who are on two sides of the political divide: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ on one side and ʿAlī on the other. The first three have an active presence there and it is they who do most of the talking. ʿAlī, on the other hand, does not talk much, but he is

the central character about whom the other three do, since it is he who is alleged to have created the problem with which the three have to deal, namely his failure to publicly acknowledge Abū Bakr as successor to the Prophet.

The treatise begins with al-Tawḥīdī setting the stage for the events the treatise will describe. He and some colleagues were spending an evening at the house of his mentor, the Shāfiʿī jurist Abū Ḥāmid al-Marwarrūdhī (d.362/972) in Baghdad in Mādhabān Street. The discussion went in several directions until the topic of the caliphate and the Saqīfa came up. Abū Ḥāmid asked the company whether any of them knew (*yaḥfaẓu*) Abū Bakr's message (*risāla*) to ʿAlī, ʿAlī's answer to it, and ʿAlī's proclamation of allegiance to Abū Bakr thereafter. No one did. Abū Ḥāmid said he had not narrated it except once, to the vizier al-Muhallabī (d.352/962) who considered it uniquely revealing and sharp.[9] The company asked Abū Ḥāmid to narrate it to them, which he did, authenticating it by citing the chain of authorities who had narrated it over two and a half centuries, ending with one of the three protagonists, the illustrious Companion Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.

When Abū Bakr was elected caliph at the Saqīfa, he was concerned because ʿAlī had not publicly recognized him as caliph and feared that the situation should be protracted; he thus called Abū ʿUbayda. Abū ʿUbayda came and found ʿUmar there. Abū Bakr praised Abū ʿUbayda and charged him with the mission of going to talk to ʿAlī. He should, he said, talk gently to him, since ʿAlī was descended from Abū Ṭālib and had occupied a special place in the Prophet's sight. He should make ʿAlī understand the seriousness of the situation and that the devil was waiting to spread schism in the community. The only way out was that ʿAlī should adhere to the truth and avoid bringing on him God's wrath. The message then becomes more forceful: What is this matter by which ʿAlī is letting himself be seduced without articulating it? Did he desire a religion other than God's and a guidance other than Muḥammad's? Is he, Abū Bakr, the target of his double-dealing? He, ʿAlī, was merely a kid when Abū Bakr and the others were facing innumerable hardships for the cause of Islam. So let ʿAlī

dispense with his retreat and frowning. After all, he is the community's sword and hide, so he should not be crooked. Abū Bakr continued: he had asked the Prophet about this matter (i.e., the caliphate) and the Prophet had said: It is for the one to whom it is given, not for the one who claims it for himself. In fact, it was he, Abū Bakr, who had strongly recommended to the Prophet that ʿAlī should marry his daughter, Fāṭima, causing the Prophet to overcome the reservations he had about ʿAlī. The community needs a leader, and if the Emigrants and the Helpers agree that the leader be ʿAlī, then he, Abū Bakr, would agree with them. If not, ʿAlī should join the Muslims in accepting whomever they choose. ʿAlī is thus called upon to quit being rancorous and spiteful, have mercy on the people, and join them in their choice.

Abū ʿUbayda went to deliver the message. At the door, ʿUmar stopped him and gave him a complementary, strong message to convey to ʿAlī. What was this attitude of megalomania (*khunzuwāna*), uptightness and rancour he was exhibiting? The Prophet had passed away without saying anything about the matter [of the caliphate], without seeking the assistance of revelation about it, and without passing a pronouncement on ʿAlī concerning it. And, after all, we are not to act in the style of the chosoroes nor of the caesars;[10] rather, we are guided by the light of prophecy, message, wisdom, mercy, and a guided community which is entrusted with the truth and secured from being rended and mended. Did ʿAlī think that Abū Bakr pounced upon this thing (= the Imamate) by tricking the community? If so, by what cavalry, sword, force or power-base did he do that? Nay, Abū Bakr did not think about it, so it leaned towards him – and that from the days of the Prophet. As for ʿAlī, he is from the house of prophecy and wisdom, and as such he has a special status; but he is being jostled by a person with bigger shoulders, more advanced age, and greater dominion in pre-Islamic and Islamic times. ʿUmar went on to praise Abū Bakr for his merits, adding that, whereas ʿAlī was closer to the Prophet by blood, Abū Bakr was more intimate with him and more elevated in stature in his sight. This is why the Muslims were with him. And God being on the side of the bonded group (*jamāʿa*) and His pleasure with those who obey

him, it would be better for ʿAlī, now and in the future, to join in with the Muslims in what they have agreed upon. If he did not, he would regret that, but then it would be too late.

Abū ʿUbayda delivered the message to ʿAlī. ʿAlī denied that he had intended to disrupt the unity of the community. He explained that the cause for his delay concerning the imamate was his grief over the Prophet's death and his wish to join him, and that he had believed that people had agreed on him, ʿAlī [as successor to the Prophet]. He added ambiguously, however, that there were things in his spirit for which he could fight, giving vent to his exasperation, but he will keep them reined in, due to a previous pledge, until he meets his Lord. He will thus go the next day to give his oath of allegiance to 'your man' (*ṣāḥibikum*).

Abū ʿUbayda reported to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar on his meeting with ʿAlī, and indeed on the next day ʿAlī gave his oath of allegiance publicly to Abū Bakr. Thereafter, ʿUmar accompanied ʿAlī on his way out. ʿAlī then said to ʿUmar that he had not given his allegiance out of fear, neither had he hesitated out of a desire to cause a schism in the community. Rather, he knew his place but kept his bridle reined in, knowing that God will be just to him in this and the next world. ʿUmar then became angry and addressed every single comment ʿAlī had made to Abū ʿUbayda. ʿAlī was not the only one to grieve the Prophet's death, for the entire community did, and his role should have been to advise and guide it. And what agreement from the people on him did he believe he had? Neither the Emigrants nor the Helpers said, hinted, or even thought of him [as a successor to the Prophet]. Did he think that the entire community had gone astray, turned to disbelief, and sold the cause of God and His messenger for his sake? Nay, ʿUmar added: ʿAlī retreated into seclusion in the hope that the revelation would come to him, and the angel would speak to him. But that is a matter which God had brought to a close with Muḥammad, and now ʿAlī stands exposed. As for ʿAlī's saying that there were things he had pledged not to do in order to give vent to his exasperation, he must be aware that religion has left no room for venting one's frustration, neither with his hand nor with his tongue; after all, this venting is in the manner of the Jāhiliyya

which religion has eradicated and replaced by mercy and grace. And ʿAlī is reined in, he had said? Well, ʿUmar said, those who fear God hold off their tongues.

ʿAlī responded by affirming that he did not wish to change what he had done since the worst of people are the hypocritical and those who cause schisms. He sought God's solace for all oppressive things, for it was on Him that he, ʿAlī, relied. Addressing ʿUmar, then, he said: ʿUmar should be at ease, for whatever he has heard and said led only to concord and harmony. Abū ʿUbayda commented that that was the hardest thing that they had undergone after the demise of the Prophet. And with that, the treatise comes to a close.

Al-Tawḥīdī's Sunni position on the legitimacy of Abū Bakr's caliphate is matched by his clearly Sunni condemnation of the violent end of the third caliph, ʿUthmān, when he was killed in Medina in 35/656 at the hand of some Muslims who are called 'transgressors' (*ẓalama*) by al-Tawḥīdī.[11] What is not as clear in al-Tawḥīdī's texts is who bears the responsibility of this killing, although, here again, ʿAlī emerges as not totally absolved of this responsibility, at least indirectly. Thus, although al-Tawḥīdī, hiding behind the words of other authorities, notes that the people of Medina deserted ʿUthmān,[12] as did the Anṣār,[13] it was ʿAlī's failure to lend him support when he was attacked that led to his killing. In fact, in a rather peculiar text, al-Tawḥīdī makes ʿUthmān himself anticipate ʿAlī's role in his killing before the actual event of the killing took place. The story goes as follows. ʿAlī was taken ill, so ʿUthmān went to visit him. At the end of the visit, ʿUthmān said to ʿAlī:

> I do not know whether I should be happier if you were to live or if you were to die, for if you died, I would not be able to find one who could replace you; but if you lived, the discreditors would take you as a support and refuge, and nothing would protect me from them except their esteem in your sight and yours in theirs. I and you are thus like a father and his recalcitrant son: if the son dies, the father is bereaved, and if he lives, the father is repudiated. Therefore, let us be clear and either be at peace or at war with each other, and do not keep us [dangling] between heaven

> and earth.[14] For, by God, if you kill me, you would not find one who could replace me, and if I kill you, I would not find one who could replace you. And [rest assured] that no one who initiates strife (*fitna*) would [be able to] take charge of the caliphate.…'

The story goes on to weaken ʿAlī's position further by portraying him as incapable of defending himself in the face of ʿUthmān's latent accusations. He says to ʿUthmān: 'There is an answer to what you have said, but I am [now] distracted from (*mashghūl*) answering you. Rather I would say what the good man [Joseph] said [in the Qur'an]: "[for me] patience is most fitting and it is God [alone] whose help can be sought"' (12:18).[15]

Al-Tawḥīdī's implicit blame of ʿAlī for ʿUthmān's killing takes other forms. One of them is to make a prominent Companion of the Prophet allude to a communal responsibility of which ʿAlī partakes. He narrates that, in a visit to ʿAlī after ʿUthmān's death, the Companion al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr said to ʿAlī that those who loved ʿUthmān deserted him, and those who deserted him left him for his killers. The deserters thus thought that those who loved him, by failing to support him, were in agreement with them that he should be deserted, and the killers thought that the deserters, by showing their desertion, were close to them in wanting him killed. As such, things mutually supported each other, and now everybody regrets what he has done. Although al-Nuʿmān never mentioned ʿAlī's name, ʿAlī got the message, in al-Tawḥīdī's rendition of the story. This is why he tells al-Nuʿmān to protect himself from ʿAlī's punishment (*ikfinī nafsaka*), and advises him to leave his land and reside anywhere else he chooses – which he actually does, and heads to Syria.[16]

Unlike the situation with Abū Bakr's election to the caliphate, though, al-Tawḥīdī leaves some room for relieving ʿAlī of the blatant responsibility of ʿUthmān's murder, and allows him and others to speak in some defence of ʿAlī's antagonistic stance towards ʿUthmān. In one instance, ʿAlī is portrayed as attributing ʿUthmān's killing to his excessive misappropriation of power which produced excessive anxiety among 'us.'[17] In another, ʿAlī takes a different line of argument: it was not he, ʿAlī, alone who failed to support ʿUthmān; others of the earliest and best Muslims did, too.

He says: those who deserted ʿUthmān were Badrīs, and those who killed him were the Egyptians. But those who supported him cannot say: ʿUthmān was deserted by people who are less good than we are, nor can those who deserted him say: ʿUthmān was supported by people who are better than we are. ʿAlī then swears by God that he had neither ordered nor prohibited ʿUthmān's killing; indeed, if he had ordered this killing, he would have been his killer [which he was not], and if he had prohibited it, he would have been his supporter [which he was also not].[18]

Al-Tawḥīdī then brings other voices that cast further doubt on ʿAlī's responsibility for ʿUthmān's murder. One is the famous Sharīk b. ʿAbdallāh, the well-known 2nd/8th century Kūfan judge. A man asks Sharīk about ʿAlī's saying to his son: I wish your father had died twenty years before this day! Did he mean that he had self-doubt about his stance on the day ʿUthmān was killed, the man asked? Sharīk answered in the negative indirectly: Did Mary mean that she had self-doubt about her chastity when she said, as is stated in the Qur'an 'Would that I had died before this [pregnancy] and would that I had been a thing forgotten' (19:23)?[19] Another authority is al-Tawḥīdī's mentor, Abū Ḥāmid al-Marwarrūdhī. In his opinion, ʿUthmān's case was an ambiguous one. If he had actually sinned, then he could not continue to be a legitimate imam; if what he committed was subject to interpretation, then he did not deserve to be killed. The Prophet's Companions did not take action, then, because the case was problematic and the times bad. What the Companions should have ideally done was to advise ʿUthmān, and, if he persisted, to dismiss him from office and elect someone else to the caliphate. The great misfortune occurred, however, when the Companions did not rush to his support when they believed he was unjustly judged, or when they did not advise him nor dismiss him from office when they believed he had erred. Even then, whether he did err is subject to interpretation.[20] Lastly, al-Tawḥīdī himself adds his voice to the voice of the skeptics. He says: it is extremely difficult to know the precise truth about things that happened in the distant and problematic past.[21]

Al-Tawḥīdī's position on the Battle of the Camel is not very

clear, although he does cite the well-known saying of ʿĀ'isha that she choked just before her death at remembering her role in that battle.[22] His position on the Battle of Ṣiffīn, however, is clearer, and it is not flattering for ʿAlī. ʿAlī's army in that battle was awesome, even for Muʿāwiya,[23] but, being a man of religion and piety, ʿAlī was outwitted by Muʿāwiya, lost the battle, and became in dire need of God's mercy.[24] Again, although he was a singularly courageous man,[25] and often directed his soldiers how to fight,[26] ʿAlī was perceived even by some of his more sympathetic contemporaries, like al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, as inept in military strategy and financial administration.[27] His adversary, Muʿāwiya, on the other hand, was a man of the world and as such successful in it,[28] and indeed many people got attracted to his cause precisely because of the promise of worldly gain.[29] In general, too, Muʿāwiya was, in the opinion of one of ʿAlī's supporters, the Companion Abū Barza al-Aslamī, more discreet than ʿAlī, more in control of his army, and more discerning of his enemy's moves.[30]

Al-Tawḥīdī seems to believe that ʿAlī's Achilles' heel at the Battle of Ṣiffīn was his agreement to the arbitration and subsequent acceptance that Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī should be his representative there. In a rather strong condemnation of ʿAlī's decision about the arbitration, al-Tawḥīdī records two reports. In the first, a woman from the tribe of ʿAbs tells ʿAlī that three of his actions have disturbed his followers: his acceptance of the arbitration, his taking the easy way out, and his panic at the moment of adversity. Instead of addressing her concerns, as he had done with the Khārijīs at Ḥarūrā,[31] ʿAlī tells her that she was merely a woman and asks her to go and sit on her behind, leaving things which were none of her business alone. His answer antagonized her and she vowed not to sit except under swords drawn against him.[32] In the second, ʿAlī's great-grandson, Zayd, asks a Khārijī about his claim that ʿUthmān was more courageous than ʿAlī. Certainly, the Khārijī replies, ʿAlī was courageous only when he had a discerning mind and did not seek the world; when he did seek it, his courage was gone. For ʿUthmān was told [by his future killers] that he was free to go wherever he wanted provided he gave up his office as head of the community. He refused, saying that he would not take off a

robe with which God had clothed him, for which reason he was killed. As for ʿAlī, he was told: Put Abū Mūsā and ʿAmr b. al-Āṣ in charge of the arbitration or we will kill you. He chose to accept the arbitration.[33]

More criticism of ʿAlī came from one of his closest supporters, his cousin ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās, with whom he had had some friction earlier[34] but who stood firmly with him in his battles, including Ṣiffīn. In several places, al-Tawḥīdī cites Ibn al-ʿAbbās' displeasure with ʿAlī's decision to accept that Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī represent him at the arbitration.[35] According to one story, Ibn al-ʿAbbās advised ʿAlī to make him his representative at the arbitration, since he could cut a tight and secure deal for him. ʿAlī refused on the basis, he said, of Ibn al-ʿAbbās being no match for the representative of Muʿāwiya, ʿAmr b. al-Āṣ, in cunning. Ibn al-ʿAbbās then concluded that ʿAlī's cause, though right, would be lost.[36] In that respect, ʿAlī showed less acumen than Muʿāwiya, who, upon sensing the potentially dangerous role that Ibn al-ʿAbbās could play in the arbitration, asked his brother ʿUtba to pre-empt any move Ibn al-ʿAbbās could make.[37] When ʿAlī accepted his supporters' demand that he be represented by Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, another strong-minded person from ʿAlī's camp, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, thought that Abū Mūsā should be supported by other men.[38] The arbitration turned not in ʿAlī's favour. Ibn al-ʿAbbās' comment was that no great knowledge had been expected from Abū Mūsā, nor was his weakness to be trusted.[39] Speculating later on these events, he attributed ʿAlī's failure, the short duration of his rule, and the trials and tribulations he had to face, to fate. Still, he thought, Ibn al-ʿAbbās added, that if he had been appointed to the arbitration, things would have been different. But it was too late by then. What has remained of the experience was sadness; but there was always tomorrow, and ʿAlī was the winner in the hereafter,[40] for, after all, he was in the right, and the devil's breath does not eliminate what is right.[41] This last position is one with which al-Tawḥīdī would probably agree. At one place, he narrates a saying attributed to Ibn al-ʿAbbās to the effect that Muʿāwiya would surely win since God has said in the Qurʾan 'and if anyone is slain wrongfully, We have given his heir authority (to

demand retaliation)' (17: 33), meaning that God would grant Muʿāwiya the power to defeat ʿAlī since he was avenging the blood of the unjustly killed ʿUthmān. Al-Tawḥīdī is unhappy with this story; he comments: I do not know how this story could be true. For, if Ibn al-ʿAbbās had the proof to whom God has given power, then he would have sided with the one who had that power and left the one who did not have it. But some narrations are true, others not.[42]

Al-Tawḥīdī's attitude towards the Umayyads is generally favourable.[43] Although we need not go into many details here, it is important to highlight his perceptive explanation for their rise to the leadership of the community since it includes his explanation for the fall of the Prophet's family from power after the assassination of ʿAlī and the abdication of his son al-Ḥasan. There is no disagreement among the chroniclers and historians (*al-ruwāt wa aṣḥāb al-ta'rīkh*), al-Tawḥīdī said to one of his patrons, that when the Prophet died many of the Umayyads and their close allies were already occupying positions of power: ʿAttāb b. Asīd was in charge of Mecca, Khālid b. Saʿīd of Ṣanʿā', Abū Sufyān of Najrān, Abān b. Saʿīd b. al-Āṣ of ʿUmān, Saʿīd b. al-Qashb al-Azdī of Jurash and its region, al-Muhājir b. Abī Umayya'l-Makhzūmī of Kinda and al-Ṣadif, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ of ʿUmān, and ʿUthmān b. Abi'l-Āṣ of Ṭā'if. 'If,' he added, 'the Prophet had laid down this foundation and made known their status to all people, how could their opinion not be strengthened, their hope stretched out, and their aspiration to power reinforced? Conversely, how could the aspiration of the Banū Hāshim not be weakened, their expectation reduced, and their hope curbed? After all, [we are talking about] this world, and religion in this world is accidental, and this world is desirable. At any rate, this and similar situations sharpened their (i.e., the Umayyads') teeth, opened wide their doors, filled their cups to the brim, and spliced their ropes; and signs antecede matters, and things are known by their foretokens.'[44] The Banū Hāshim, al-Tawḥīdī added, were privileged with the call to Islam, prophecy and the Qur'an, but matters of the world are passed on from one group to another,[45] so the Umayyads ended up with political dominance. In this respect, a significant story has been narrated:

Abū Sufyān stood at the grave of Ḥamza, the Prophet's uncle who was killed at the Battle of Uḥud, i.e., when Abū Sufyān and most of the Umayyads had not yet accepted the call to Islam. He said, 'May God have mercy on you, O Abū 'Umāra! You have fought us over a matter which has wound up to be ours!'[46]

Let me before concluding this section mention a relevant event which occurred during the Umayyad period and on which al-Tawḥīdī commented, namely the killing of al-Ḥusayn. This is condemned in several of al-Tawḥīdī's texts. In one of these texts, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, the pious Umayyad caliph, says: 'If I were among those who killed al-Ḥusayn and were ordered to enter paradise, I would not enter it, lest my eye should fall on Muḥammad's.'[47] In another, the pious al-Rabī' b. Khuthaym (d.70/690 or 90/709) grieves at learning about the killing of al-Ḥusayn and asks God to be the judge between his disputing people[48] – and severe disputes between the Muslims did indeed occur, according to another of al-Tawḥīdī's texts, precisely because of the different positions the Muslims took towards the killing of al-Ḥusayn.[49] Al-Ḥusayn's killing is also presented as one that eventually caused destruction to the killer. Thus, in an oft-cited anecdote, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umayr (d.136/754), the Kūfan judge, points to the governor's residence in Kūfa and marvels: I have seen wonders in this palace: al-Ḥusayn's head in front of Ibn Ziyād, Ibn Ziyād's head in front of al-Mukhtār, al-Mukhtār's head in front of Muṣ'ab, and Muṣ'ab's head in front of 'Abd al-Malik.[50] Al-Ḥusayn's killing is furthermore portrayed as one which brings bad luck to the participants in it. This is implied in a letter which 'Abd al-Malik wrote to al-Ḥajjāj in which he asks him not to spill the blood of any of the Ṭālibids, since when the Sufyānids (Āl Ḥarb) killed al-Ḥusayn, God took sovereignty away from them[51] – meaning that it passed to the Marwānids thereafter. And in a rather unique story, a bedouin from the tribe of Ṭayyi' who lives in Karbalā', where al-Ḥusayn was killed, prepares food for his guests. The subject of al-Ḥusayn's killing comes up, and the company discusses how all those who participated in his killing died in very bad ways. The bedouin objects explaining that he himself had participated in al-Ḥusayn's killing and nothing has happened to

him. He then goes to the lamp to take the burning wick out of it, and lo and behold, his beard catches fire! He rushes to the water but burns immediately and ends up looking like a coal.[52]

The Theological Sphere

As a Sunni, al-Tawḥīdī condemned some of the Shiʿis' fundamental, general beliefs and rejected specific beliefs of particular Shiʿi sects. Two of the general beliefs he found particularly objectionable: the doctrine of the infallibility of the imam and that of the disavowal of the Companions of the Prophet.

(1) Al-Tawḥīdī's rejection of the doctrine of *ʿiṣma*, or the infallibility of the imam, is based on his belief that there is a fundamental distinction between the attributes of God and those of man. Infallibility is defined, according to him, as the impermissibility of the occurrence of error or forgetfulness on the part of one who is infallible. Man is by definition one who errs and forgets, thus fallibility – not infallibility – is a basic attribute of his (*min ṣifāt al-insān*), as opposed to infallibility, which is an attribute (*naʿt*) of God, the Lord of all creatures. Thus, when the Shiʿis claim that their imams are infallible, they actually confer upon them an attribute of the Deity. In fact, some Shiʿis did go as far as to claim that ʿAlī was a god. Al-Tawḥīdī recounts that he himself met one of them and asked him why those people believed that ʿAlī was a god. The Shiʿi answered: Because [the sixth Imam] Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq told them he was. Al-Tawḥīdī persisted, 'So why is it, if Jaʿfar said so, it should be true?' The Shiʿi had no answer other than: 'This is the kind of talk the Nāṣiba [=Sunnis] engage in!' All of this, according to al-Tawḥīdī, is indicative of 'recklessness and insolence' (*tajlīḥ, jurʾa*).[53] It is also indicative of the dangers involved in claiming that the imam is infallible. Two such dangers are highlighted in al-Tawḥīdī's texts.

The first is that the doctrine of the infallibility of the imam prepares the way for the growth of extremism in the ranks of the Shiʿis (*wa li-hādhā nashaʾat fī-him al-ghāliya*).[54] Besides being bad in itself, extremism has the added misfortune of breeding counter-extremism, thereby pitting the community of the Muslims in

sectarian strife. As al-Tawḥīdī's mentor once said, 'Had not the Khārijīs claimed that ʿAlī is a non-believer, the extreme Shiʿis (*al-ghāliya*) would not have said that ʿAlī is God; and had the Muʿtazila not said that we are in full control of our destinies, the Jahmīs [= predestinarians] would not have said: We are like a tree, if the wind blows it moves, and if it does not it subsides.'[55] The second danger of belief in the infallibility of the imam is related to this matter. It is that it makes the dialogue between the Shiʿis and non-Shiʿis futile.

In an amusing paragraph of his *al-Imtāʿ wa'l-muʾānasa*,[56] al-Tawḥīdī narrates the story of a Sunni by the name of ʿUthmān b. Khālid who approached a Shiʿi by the name of Ibn al-Haytham with the suggestion that they debate the issue of the imamate. Ibn al-Haytham said that such a debate would turn into ʿUthmān advising him to accept his opinion. ʿUthmān promised he would not do so. The debate thus began, with Ibn al-Haytham laying down the ground rules. The person most worthy of the imamate, he said, is the best person whose superiority is known through transmissions and narrations. If ʿUthmān wished, he, Ibn al-Haytham, would acknowledge all what ʿUthmān and his Sunni colleagues claim to be the superior qualities of their imam, and at the same time ʿUthmān would acknowledge to Ibn al-Haytham all that he and his Shiʿi colleagues claim to be the superior qualities of their imam. Immediately ʿUthmān realized this was not possible, because, he said, 'I and my colleagues claim that our imam is a mere Muslim (*rajul min al-muslimīn*) who errs or is right, and who knows or is ignorant, whereas you say that your imam is protected from error (*maʿṣūm min al-khaṭāʾ*) and knowledgeable in all matters (*ʿālim bi-mā yuḥtāj ilayhi*).' The attempt at going on with the dialogue continued, as I will mention below, but in the end the dialogue could not but end in a stalemate.

(2) Al-Tawḥīdī remains cool while refuting the doctrine of the infallibility of the imam, and actually he does not dwell long on it. This is not the case with the second doctrine of the Shiʿis he objects to, namely their attributing disbelief to, and hence their cursing of, the Prophet's Companions (*takfīr/sabb al-ṣaḥāba*), or more specifically those Companions who did not acknowledge

ʿAlī's right to the imamate – especially the first three caliphs: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān – also ʿĀ'isha, the Prophet's favourite wife, daughter of Abū Bakr and fierce enemy of ʿAlī. In one place, al-Tawḥīdī literally retorts with a counter-curse when he hears a Shiʿi's misrepresentation of ʿAlī's own public statement that Abū Bakr was the best man of the community of the Muslims aside from the Prophet. The man said, ''Alī meant by that that Abū Bakr was the most distinguished of this misguided, iniquitous and apostate community, not the community [of the Muslims] that you know!' Al-Tawḥīdī's reaction was a simple, 'May God damn whosoever curses the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad!'[57] Still carrying on with this angry tone but now citing the text of a Sunni scholar's letter, al-Tawḥīdī presents an argument against the doctrine of *takfīr/sabb*, under the rubric of disavowal/dissociation (*barā'/barā'a*), which highlights both its flaws and dire consequences. This scholar, a certain Hishām al-Wāsiṭī, addresses the query of a lay Sunni about how to stand up to the attacks of the Shiʿis and the Qadarīs by saying, 'If you wish to have the kind of faith that the good old Companions of Muḥammad (*al-salaf min aṣḥāb Muḥammad*) had, then do not ever attribute disbelief to any one of this community because of an infraction (*dhanb*) he has committed; for those who claim that a creature is capable of that which the Creator is not, will [in effect] attribute incapacity to God. And [note] that whosoever disavows Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān disavows ʿAlī also, and whosoever disavows ʿAlī disavows all of the others, too. And [heed this:] Disavowal is an innovation (*bidʿa*) inasmuch as excessive endorsement (*walāya*) is. So if some fair-minded but erring person debates [this issue] with you, then recite to him the Qurʾanic verse, "God's good pleasure was on the believers when they swore their fealty to you under the tree" (48:18). If he disbelieved it, then he has disbelieved the Qurʾan.'[58] The ideal situation for a Muslim, Hishām al-Wāsiṭī adds, is that one should pray, perform the pilgrimage and fight the *jihād* in the company of all Muslims, good and bad (*maʿa kull barr wa fājir*), for this – and here al-Tawḥīdī's voice steps in, obviously in approval – is the way to avoid suspension of [God's] laws.[59]

In a more elaborate attack on the doctrine of discrediting the

Prophet's Companions (*ṭa'n*), al-Tawḥīdī cites the lengthy comment of his teacher Abū Ḥāmid al-Marwarrūdhī on one of the key *ḥadīth*s that are cited in defence of the Companions, namely the Prophet's saying, 'My Companions are like the stars: you will be rightly guided no matter which of them you emulate.' Abū Ḥāmid says: What the Prophet meant by that is that all his Companions shone brightly like the stars. Thereafter, also like the stars, some provided more guidance than others. Some were born earlier, were older, earlier to emigrate [to Medina], more experienced and closer to the Prophet than others, like Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq; these are more worthy of being emulated.'[60] Abū Ḥāmid then goes on to counter the Shi'is' attribution of disbelief to Abū Bakr. How could the Prophet make his statement if he knew – as the Rāfiḍa claim – that Abū Bakr was going to fall into disbelief and lead the entire community into apostasy – the community which Muḥammad worked hard to save from error, disbelief and iniquity? This is impossible to imagine, let alone believe in![61] Thus, the people who make it a habit to curse the Prophet's Companions are, according to Abū Ḥāmid, despicable and totally ignorant of things plain and hidden. All one can do when faced by them is to ask for God's help to keep one's religion intact, to support His Prophet and those who follow him, and to hold no grudge against any of the believers.[62]

Abū Ḥāmid, of course, represents the Sunni position, of which al-Tawḥīdī partakes. As presented in al-Tawḥīdī's texts, and as we have gleaned of some of the above, this position reveres all of the Companions of the Prophet[63] with no exception, and hence holds the Prophet's family in general (variously as 'Ahl al-Bayt,' 'Banū Hāshim') and 'Alī's family in particular in great esteem.[64] He thus cites statements by various authorities, both in verse and prose, which hail them as shining lights of the community, such as the saying of the Prophet: 'I am the tree: its twig is Fāṭima, its branches 'Alī, its fruits al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and our Shi'is its leaves.'[65] He condemns the killing of several 'Alids,[66] particularly the killing of 'Alī's son al-Ḥusayn, as we have seen above; and while 'Alī's other son, al-Ḥasan, did not perform any heroic act to deserve particular praise, he is portrayed in al-Tawḥīdī's texts as pious,[67]

wise,[68] and pragmatic,[69] though, like his father, unskilled in matters of military strategy and financial administration.[70] ʿAlī's third son, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, is highly praised in al-Tawḥīdī's texts. Cognizant of his slightly inferior position to his half-brothers al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (his mother being a Ḥanafī woman, not Fāṭima), he is portrayed as holding no grudge against that[71] but rather capitalizing on his courage in battle,[72] religious knowledge,[73] and, above all, eloquence,[74] which al-Tawḥīdī seems to have truly admired.[75] But it is ʿAlī who gets the lion's share of praise from al-Tawḥīdī, though without raising him above Abū Bakr.[76] He cites scores of his eloquent and succinct wise sayings,[77] lauds his religious knowledge,[78] particularly in the areas of the Qurʾan,[79] *ḥadīth*,[80] law,[81] theology[82] and genealogy.[83] He also leaves a good deal of room for various authorities to sing his praises: his piety, integrity, courage, asceticism, and so forth.[84]

It is against this picture that we should understand al-Tawḥīdī's and his colleagues' impatience, and sometimes anger, at the hostile and discriminatory position the Shiʿis took against some of the most distinguished of the Prophet's Companions. And it is precisely because of the fundamental difference in attitude between the Sunnis and the Shiʿis towards the Companions that any dialogue between the two on this topic ends with a stalemate. This brings us back to our two protagonists, Ibn al-Haytham the Shiʿi and ʿUthmān b. Khālid the Sunni who, as we have seen above, tried to solve their differences through debate. The debate, as al-Tawḥīdī tells it, continued along those lines. Ibn al-Haytham suggested to ʿUthmān that he would accept all that ʿUthmān and his colleagues say about ʿAlī, good and bad; in return, ʿUthmān should accept all that Ibn al-Haytham recounts about Abū Bakr, good and bad. ʿUthmān, however, could not see how this could work. He said, 'This is worse than [your earlier suggestion]; for whereas I and my colleagues narrate that your man [=ʿAlī] is a good, righteous believer, you and your colleagues narrate that my man [=Abū Bakr] is an iniquitous non-believer. So how do you expect me to accept this [assumption] from you and then enter into a debate with you?' Trying to salvage the situation, Ibn al-Haytham said, 'Well, why don't you quit your and your colleagues'

opinion and follow my and my colleagues' instead?' 'Uthmān agreed there was, theoretically, no other way. Ibn al-Haytham then concluded, and 'Uthmān agreed, that there was no basis for debate between the two of them; for any dialogue to continue, one party has to accept the other's primary position.

These are the two general Shi'i doctrines against which al-Tawḥīdī spoke (or made others speak). Other doctrines which are associated with specific Shi'i groups and which he opposed are:

(i) The doctrine of *badā'*, which states that God could change his mind about a certain matter. This belief is associated, as al-Tawḥīdī says (and is well known), with the Shi'is who supported al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī, the Kaysāniyya, since al-Mukhtār used to promise his supporters victory on behalf of God, and when that victory did not materialize, he would say: God changed His mind (*badā lahu*) – in order not to say: God went back on his word (*akhlafa*).[85] According to a prominent Zaydī leader, Sulaymān b. Jarīr, this is a mere ruse (*ḥīla*).[86]

(ii) The same Zaydī Sulaymān commented on another doctrine, this time of the Imāmī Shi'is, namely prudent dissimulation (*taqiyya*); he considered it also a ruse.[87] But al-Tawḥīdī offers no further comments on it.

(iii) Other beliefs which al-Tawḥīdī found objectionable belong to various extremist Shi'is. Among these are anthropomorphism and metempsychosis;[88] but again al-Tawḥīdī just registers them without comment. He has more to say on those extremists who were convinced that 'Alī was not dead but alive, residing in the clouds. Against this doctrine, he cites the verse of the famous ascetic Ibn al-Mubārak (d.181/797). After declaring that he would shudder at cursing Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān and at slandering 'Ā'isha, he adds that it would be wanton deviation and outrageous to claim that 'Alī was in the clouds. If he indeed were there, rain would have thrown him to the earth, and anyway clouds never carried a human being. Rather, he concludes, he loves 'Alī

moderately, and would not consider him superior to ʿUthmān in merit.[89]

(iv) But the belief which al-Tawḥīdī shows great resentment to is the belief in the inner meanings of things (*bāṭin*), particularly religion's authoritative texts and laws. He seems to associate this belief particularly with the Bāṭiniyya, meaning the Ismāʿīliyya, of his time, a matter that I will discuss in the next section. It seems, though, that al-Tawḥīdī had noted this tendency in Shiʿis other than the Bāṭiniyya for he hints that it has its roots in sayings that have been attributed to figures venerated by practically all Shiʿis: ʿAlī and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. ʿAlī, he narrates, is reported to have considered the Qurʾanic verse about Noah's flood, 'and the fountains of the earth gushed forth' (11: 40), to mean: and when it was daybreak. Al-Tawḥīdī is puzzled by this interpretation. He says, 'This is very strange (*gharīb jiddan*), and I am not inclined to believe every strange thing. The story about the fountains of the earth is too clear to permit metaphorical interpretation without proof, or deviation from the outward meaning without justification. If this [kind of inner interpretation] were permissible, accounts would be hideous and suspicions widespread.'[90] Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is reported to have been even more excessive in interpreting authoritative statements. Al-Tawḥīdī gives two examples of them without any comment, as if he means that their incorrectness was self-explanatory. The first concerns the Qurʾan 102:8, 'Then shall you be asked about the joy you indulged in,' which describes what the non-believers will be accountable for when they are sent to Hell in the hereafter. Jaʿfar picks the word 'joy' (*naʿīm*) and interprets it as 'the Prophet's family' (*ahl al-bayt*), meaning that the non-believers will be accountable on the Day of Judgement for their attitude towards the imams.[91] The second concerns the Qurʾanic dictum: Command the good and prohibit evil (*al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*). Contrary to what Abū Ḥanīfa said it meant – that Muslims should call for implementing the good and desisting from evil – Jaʿfar says, 'the good' means the

> Commander of the Faithful [ʿAlī] and 'evil' means disowning him unjustly of his rightful inheritance and calling upon people to hate him.[92]

It must be noted, though, that al-Tawḥīdī is not fully convinced that all the statements that have been attributed to Jaʿfar were necessarily uttered by him. Once, after citing a saying allegedly Jaʿfar's ('No palm which wears a turquoise ring shall ever want'), he says, 'I do not know what the reality of this is.' But, he goes on to say, the Shiʿis narrate on Jaʿfar's authority many sayings which he never said, are utterly meaningless and useless, and have no basis in fact.[93]

The Experiential Sphere

This brings us to the third sphere of al-Tawḥīdī's view of Shiʿism, that of his personal experience with a number of Shiʿis.[94] Here the picture is not less grim than the one conveyed in the historical and theological spheres. It shows al-Tawḥīdī appalled at many things he hears in discussions with them, unhappy with their fanaticism and inner-fighting, and also wary of their ascendancy.

Al-Tawḥīdī describes a fair number of encounters with individual Shiʿis who end up saying or doing outrageous things. Some of these could be read as jokes, often using puns; but al-Tawḥīdī is very serious: he does not laugh. In one such encounter, he narrates the story of a Baghdadi Shiʿi who was learning grammar. He was asked what the sign of the accusative (*naṣb*) in the noun ''Umar' was (because the proper noun 'Umar is a diptote). Playing on the typically Shiʿi meaning of '*naṣb*': to be Sunni, the Shiʿi answers that the sign of the accusative (*naṣb*) in the noun 'Umar was 'hatred of 'Alī.'[95] Al-Tawḥīdī does not comment. But he has a great deal to say after telling the story of another encounter with another Shiʿi, a Baghdadi who was visiting Medina. When al-Tawḥīdī met him, he tells us, the man was reciting Qur'an 15: 41, '[God] said: this is for me a straight path (*hādhā ʿalayya ṣirāṭun mustaqīmun*)' – except that his recitation was not the canonical nor the grammatically possible one. Noting the word ''*alayya*' was orthographically identical to the word ''Alī,' he read the verse

with ''*Aliyyin*' instead of ''*alayya*,' explaining that it meant ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Al-Tawḥīdī tried to explain to the man that, whereas there were indeed two possibilities for reading this verse, whereby the epithet ''*alayya*' could also be read ''*aliyyun*' and hence become an adjective for 'path,' his reading, ''*aliyyin*' could not possibly work. The man would not hear of it. He said, 'I see that you do not understand. Don't you know that it is more appropriate to attribute straightness to ʿAlī than to the path? But [what does it matter?] The path *is*, after all, ʿAlī, and ʿAlī *is* the path!'[96] Al-Tawḥīdī could not keep silent: these people are excessively misguided, ignorant and insolent; their interpretations are horrid; they make up things about God's religion; and they create sedition among the people.[97]

This last anecdote demonstrates al-Tawḥīdī's Shiʿi contemporaries' excessive interest in bringing ʿAlī into centre-stage in matters where he does not belong. He relates the story of another encounter with a Shiʿi who did just that and, actually, a little more. Hearing an ancient Arabic verse of the poet ʿAmr b. Maʿdīkarib to the effect that: I want his life while he wants my death, who will now find an excuse for me?[98] – a Shiʿi stated with confidence that it was ʿAlī who composed this verse. Why? Because ʿAlī had foreknowledge that his killer, Ibn Muljam al-Murādī, was going to kill him on the head, so he cited to him the verse 'I want his life while he wants my death' before he killed him. The proof for that, the Shiʿi concluded, lies in the last two words of the verse: *min murād*,' which mean: from the *tribe* of Murād – that is nothing other than Ibn Muljam's tribe.[99]

This sort of obsession with ʿAlī's merits has made the Shiʿis, in al-Tawḥīdī's experience, quite fanatical[100] and made them forego certain basic requirements in scholarship, without being bothered that what they were doing was terribly wrong. In this connection, al-Tawḥīdī recounts the story of a Shiʿi who narrated that the famous poets of the Umayyad period, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, both of whom died in 110/728, were quite happy that the Shiʿi poet al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, who died many decades later (between 173/789 and 179/795), was preoccupied with composing poetry about his sect, for this prevented him from competing with them; if he

had competed with them, they would not have stood the competition. A man, according to al-Tawḥīdī, attracted the Shiʿi's attention to the fact that the two Umayyad poets did not meet al-Sayyid. He answered, 'Well, they heard about him.' 'No,' he was told, 'since he lived after them.' 'Well,' the Shiʿi said, 'they passed a judgement on him.' The interlocutor became impatient: 'They did not receive revelation!' But the Shiʿi persisted: 'Then they saw him in their dreams.' Sarcastically, the man answered by reciting a Qur'anic verse from the story of Joseph in which the chiefs declare to the king who had asked them to interpret his dream, 'a confused medley of dreams and we are not skilled in the interpretation of dreams' (12:44). Instead of being silenced by this answer, the Shiʿi jumped joyfully at the recited verse, saying: 'By God! This verse has been recited about al-Sayyid himself!' Now the Sunni could not take it any more and declared: 'This is indeed an iniquitous swearing (*yamīn fājira*)!'[101] On another occasion, al-Tawḥīdī narrates, an ʿAlid saw an Imāmī Shiʿi forging the wise sayings of the Sasanian vizier and sage Buzurgmihr by attaching to them chains of transmission that trace them back to members of the Prophet's family. Asked what he was doing, he said, 'I am attaching wisdom to its [proper] folk.'

Al-Tawḥīdī is particularly distressed at some contemporary Bāṭinī Shiʿis' tendency to go into enormous excesses under the guise of interpreting religious texts esoterically, like the 'saboteur' Carmatians, the Qarāmiṭa[102] and the Brethren of Purity, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'. A Carmatian, he recounts on the authority of one of his teachers, justified his capture of Mecca and his killing its people by citing, unjustifiably, Qur'an 3:97: 'whoever enters it attains security.'[103] The Brethren of Purity's claims are by far worse. These people have constructed their entire system of religious thought on the false foundation that religion and philosophy were compatible, and that the latter is the means by which the former is purified. Al-Tawḥīdī assigns many pages for refuting those claims through two of his colleagues.[104] Within this refutation, he refers to their hammering on 'the issue of outer and inner' meanings, cites some of the verses they interpret esoterically, and judges their so doing as equivocation,

trickery, illusion and allusion[105] whose purpose is to cover up what they have been suspected of, namely maligning Islam.[106] In that respect, they are much worse than the Sufis who also lean towards the esoteric interpretation of texts,[107] since they call to their creed – without proofs – through missionaries, entice people to join them, and create deception in them, thereby posing great danger to Islam and the community of the Muslims.[108]

These last remarks give us a good clue to the deep reason that lies behind al-Tawḥīdī's negative experience with the Shiʿis of his day: not only were they taking religious scholarship in directions that al-Tawḥīdī would consider wrong; they were comfortable to talk about it openly, to make counter-accusations if they were accused of being in the wrong, and even to aggressively advertise it and proselytize their ideas concerning it, as the Brethren of Purity did. In several places in his works, al-Tawḥīdī remarks that, when he or one of his Sunni contemporaries indicated to a Shiʿi that his interpretation of the Qur'an was wrong, or that ʿAlī could not be at centre-stage in a religious text, or that a historical event has been taken out of context, and so forth, al-Tawḥīdī or his contemporary seem to hear the same careless response whose gist is that the speakers are merely irreligious Sunnis/Shiʿi-haters, while they, the Shiʿis, are the upright truth-carriers. The Shiʿi whose attention was attracted to the fact that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were not contemporaneous with al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī said to the one who argued the point with him: You have become a Sunni/Shiʿi-hater as of today!;[109] and the Shiʿi to whom al-Tawḥīdī hinted that ʿAlī's divination need not be correct even if Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had said so, told al-Tawḥīdī: *hādhā kulluhu min kalām al-nāṣiba* (This is just typical Sunni talk!).[110] The other Shiʿi who transmitted Jaʿfar's statement about the hand with the turquoise ring was even more outspoken: '*anta radī' al-dīn wa li-hādhā taruddu ʿala'l-sādiqīn*' (Yours is a wicked religion; this is why you reply to the truthful).[111] As for al-Maqdisī, one of the Brethren of Purity, when he was faced with the refutation of his group's creed by al-Tawḥīdī's Sunni jurist friend, al-Jarīrī, he answered: '*al-nās aʿdā' mā jahilū*! (Oh! men are [always] antagonistic to that which they are ignorant of).'[112] Al-Tawḥīdī, therefore, cannot help but comment, after citing the

story of the verse of ʿAmr b. Maʿdīkarib which a Shiʿi attributed to ʿAlī: 'But the Shiʿis, when they hear this talk, they accuse the speaker of hating ʿAlī and they hurl at him all [kinds of] vile words....'[113]

The remainder of this last comment of al-Tawḥīdī's should bring us further understanding of his fears; he said, 'they are creating grave tribulations and affliction (*wa'l-fitna fihim shadīda wa'l-balā' ʿaẓīm*).'[114] This, he means to say, could not happen except in an environment that would permit such an attitude, and that environment was working in the Shiʿis' favour. For al-Tawḥīdī, this is frighteningly menacing: if the Shiʿi mode of religious scholarship and thought were to gain the upper hand, then the entire intellectual and moral world with which he is familiar, and which he deeply holds to be the true Islamic one, is threatened by destruction. Even more: his own experience informs him that his very subsistence could be in danger. Has he not seen political power pass to some Shiʿi figures, notably al-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād, the Būyid vizier at Rayy? And had he – and others like him – not seen unspeakable humiliation at his hands?[115] And did he not have to run away for fear that his life would be endangered, possibly after writing his treatise about the Saqīfa, and probably by the agents of this very powerful man?[116] Yes, for al-Tawḥīdī, the 4th/10th century was taking things into a new direction, where everything wrong was having ascendency – certainly the Shiʿism not of the learned but of the fanatical ignorant folk. As he said once, 'If they [=the Shiʿis] were engaged in just highlighting ʿAlī's honourable status and spreading his merits, this would have been correct, sound and pious. But then there gets attached to this that which destroys it.'[117]

What could al-Tawḥīdī do in the face of such a hostile atmosphere? Seeking refuge in God and asking Him to keep his religion intact[118] and to give the Shiʿis the judgement they deserve in the hereafter. But this is the future; what about now? Al-Tawḥīdī cannot but stick to his ideals of religion and scholarship. He actually did – and he paid for it. In the end, as Iḥsān ʿAbbās has said, al-Tawḥīdī was like a solitary tree which does not bend in the face of the mudslide, although it cannot fend it off; and although it fights

stubbornly against the overwhelming current, the current overtakes it.[119] It falls – but it remains, nevertheless, an admirable tree, a reminder of the harshness of life at times of change.

Notes

1. On al-Tawḥīdī, see S.M. Stern, 'Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,' *EI2*, vol.1, pp.126–7 (with an extensive bibliography); M. Bergé, 'Abū Ḥayyan al-Tawḥīdī,' in Julia Ashtiany et al., ed. *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: 'Abbasid Belles-Lettres* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.112–124. Several monographs have appeared on him in Arabic, the most influential of which has been Iḥsān 'Abbās, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Beirut, 1956); others are 'Abd al-Razzāq Muḥyī'l-Dīn, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī: sīratuhu - āthāruhu* (Baghdad, 1949; 2nd ed. Beirut, 1979); Ibrāhīm al-Kīlānī, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Beirut, 1957); Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥūfī, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Cairo, [1964]); Zakariyyā Ibrāhīm, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī: adīb al-falāsifa wa-faylasūf al-udabā'* (Cairo, n.d.); 'Alī Dabb, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Libya-Tunis, 1976); 'Abd al-Wāḥid Ḥasan al-Shaykh, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī wa juhūduhu'l-adabiyya wa'l-fanniyya* (Cairo, 1980); 'Abd al-Amīr al-A'sam, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī fi kitāb al-muqābasāt* (Beirut, 1980). See also Wadād al-Qāḍī, *Mujtama' al-qarn al-rābi' fi mu'allafāt Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (M.A. thesis, American University of Beirut, 1969); Marc Bergé, *Pour un humanisme vécu: Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Damascus, 1979). A conference held in Cairo in October 1995 celebrated al-Tawḥīdī's millennium; the papers presented at this conference were published in two issues of the journal *Fuṣūl*: vols 2 and 3, 1996. None of the articles dealt with al-Tawḥīdī's creed. The organizers of the conference also issued a 'selected bibliography' on Tawḥīdī: *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, bibliughrāfiya mukhtāra* (Cairo, 1995).

2. See Wadād al-Qāḍī, 'al-Rakā'iz al-fikriyya fī naẓrat Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī ilā'l-mujtama',' *al-Abhath,* 23 (1970), pp.15–32.

3. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtā' wa'l-mu'ānasa,* ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad al-Zayn (Cairo, 1953), vol.1, pp.16–18.

4. Wadād al-Qāḍī, ed. *al-Baṣā'ir wa'l-dhakhā'ir* (Beirut, 1988), vol.7, p.53.

5. *Al-Baṣā'ir,* vol.7, pp.74–75.

6. *Al-Imtā'*, vol.2, p.75.

7. *Al-Baṣā'ir,* vol.5, p.199.

8. This treatise was published in Ibrāhīm al-Kīlānī, ed. *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Damascus, 1951), pp. 5–26.

9. *Lā aʿrifu ʿalā wajh al-arḍ risālatan aʿqala minhā wa lā abyan, wa innahā la-tadullu ʿalā ʿilmin wa ḥilm, wa faṣāḥa wa faqāha, wa dahā' wa dīn, wa buʿd wa ghawr, wa shidda wa ghawṣ*; *Risālāt al-Saqīfa*, p.6

10. *Wa lasnā fi kisrawiyyat kisrā wa lā qayṣariyyat qayṣar*; *Risālāt al-Saqīfa*, p.17.

11. *Al-Imtāʿ*, vol.3, p.200.

12. Ibid., vol.3, p.165.

13. Ibid., vol.3, p.169.

14. The text has *al-mā'* (water).

15. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.6, pp.20–21.

16. Ibid., vol.3, p.24.

17. Ibid., vol.3, p.106.

18. Ibid., vol.3, p.173.

19. Ibid., vol.5, p.215.

20. Ibid., vol.3, p.173.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., vol.7, p.51.

23. Ibid., vol.2, p.56.

24. Ibid., vol.1, p.169.

25. Ibid., vol.6, p.85; vol.8, p.70.

26. Ibid., vol.9, p.182.

27. Ibid., vol.1, p.169.

28. Ibid., vol.8, p.92.

29. Ibid., vol.1, p.169.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., vol.5, pp.73–74.

32. Ibid., vol.8, p.116.

33. Ibid., vol.5, p.186.

34. Ibid., vol.2, pp.187–190.

35. Ibid., vol.4, p.243; vol.5, p.215; vol.8, p.123.

36. Ibid., vol.8, p.123.

37. Ibid., vol.9, p.220.

38. Ibid., vol.9, p.79: *ammā idhā ḥakkamtum abā mūsā fa-adfi'ū ẓahrahu bi'l-rijāl* (Now that you have appointed Abū Mūsā as arbiter, warm up his back with men).

39. Ibid., vol.5, p.215.

40. Ibid., vol.4, p.243.

41. Ibid., vol.5, p.215.

42. Ibid., vol.2, p.195.

43. See, for example, *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.9, p.182, where the respected jurist Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d.96/714) says that the Umayyads are fused with forbearance (*udmijū bi'l-ḥilm idmājan*). In the same book, vol.2, pp.240–241, al-Tawḥīdī expresses his admiration of Ziyād's words and comments that the Umayyads' talk (*kalām*) was rational; if they had sought the world with it, that makes one marvel at them; if, on the other hand, they had sought with it the next world, in addition to what they had actually attained in this world, then they were God's select and righteous people (*ṣafwat Allāh wa abrār 'ibādihi*).

44. *Al-Imtā'*, vol.2, pp.73–74.

45. Ibid., vol.2, p.75.

46. Ibid.

47. *Al-Baṣā'ir,* vol.7, p.47.

48. Ibid., vol.8, p.143; see also the clever comment of a bedouin on the killing in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.78.

49. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.3, p.43, where al-Tawḥīdī narrates a story which shows the subtle interpretations the opposing Muslim groups gave to al-Ḥusayn's killing, thereby showing the deep differences among them in viewing this episode of Islamic history. The story, narrated on the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī, says that al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf said to the killer of al-Ḥusayn: 'By God, you two (i.e., he and al-Ḥusayn) will never meet in paradise.' The story goes on to say: 'So the Iraqis [=the Shi'is] went out saying: By God, the son of God's Messenger and his killer will never meet in paradise, while the Syrians [=the pro-Umayyads] went out saying: the Governor is right; the one who disobeyed the Muslims and rebelled against the Commander of the Faithful and the one who killed him [in defence of obedience to God] will never meet in paradise.'

50. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, pp.133–134.

51. Ibid., vol.5, p.214.

52. Ibid., vol.9, pp.218–219.

53. Ibid., vol.7, p.225.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid., vol.4, p.334.

56. *Al-Imtā'*, vol.3, p.195.

57. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.4, pp.20–21.

58. Ibid., vol.8, p.172.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., vol.7, pp.261–262.

61. Ibid., vol.7, p.263.

62. Ibid., vol.7, p.264. See also al-Tawḥīdī's *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn,* ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Damascus, [1965]), p.404, where al-Tawḥīdī condemns the Zaydī vizier al-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād for speaking ill of 'the two patricians' (*al-shaykhayn*), Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

63. See a typical statement about the first four 'rightly-guided' caliphs with which al-Tawḥīdī would surely concur in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.102.

64. See *Akhlāq*, p.295, where al-Tawḥīdī criticizes al-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād for being disrespectful of visitors of his from the Ḥijāz, saying sarcastically: 'Is this [his way of expressing] the partisanship (*tashayyuʿ*) and loyalty (*walā'*) which are [rightly] due for this family (*al-bayt*)? And then he claims that he is a Zaydī!'

65. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.6, p.112. For other praises of the Prophet's family, see *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.183; vol.2, pp.81–83; vol.3, p.37; vol.8, pp.67, 97, 162; see also *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.3, p.104.

66. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.23.

67. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.97, where his half-brother, Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, offers an elegy at his grave, and *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.19, where an invocation of his is cited.

68. See some of his wise sayings in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.231 and *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.2, p.63.

69. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.2, p.64: dishonour is better than fire (*al-ʿār khayr min al-nār*); see also vol.9, p.69.

70. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.169.

71. Ibid., vol.4, pp.245–246.

72. Ibid., vol.1, pp.184–185.

73. Ibid., vol.1, p.147.

74. Ibid., vol.1, pp.14, 146–147, 148, 148–149, 184–185.

75. See al-Tawḥīdī's comments on Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's wise sayings in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, pp.145, 147, 149.

76. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.6, pp.124, 148–149; also vol.6, pp.67–68, where a comparison is drawn between ʿAlī and his slain brother Jaʿfar. As noted in the footnotes, the text could have been tampered with.

77. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, pp.26, 36, 41, 66–67, 117, 157; vol.2, pp.14, 25, 118, 149, 186, 230; vol.3, pp.27, 165; vol.4, p.157; vol.5, pp.37, 174, 225; vol.7, pp.46, 47, 141, 164–165, 214; vol.8, pp.66–67, 183; vol.9, pp.105, 116.

78. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.77.

79. Ibid., vol.1, p.5; vol.8, p.67.

80. Ibid., vol.1, pp.149–150; vol.6, p.207; vol.9, p.23; *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.3, p.197.

81. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.4, pp.144–145; vol.5, p.172; vol.8, p.120.

82. Ibid., vol.2, p.9; vol.5, pp.189, 210–211.

83. Ibid., vol.6, p.70.

84. See especially *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.1, p.172; vol.2, p.29; vol.3, pp.21, 29, 124; vol.4, p.22; vol.6, pp.85, 216, 244; vol.8, pp.16, 32, 70, 96, 166, 194, 208; vol.9, pp.64–65, 156; *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.2, p.95.

85. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.254.

86. Ibid., vol.8, p.162.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., vol.9, pp.195–196.

89. Ibid., vol.1, pp.142–143.

90. Ibid., vol.8, p.67.

91. Ibid., vol.8, p.162.

92. Ibid., vol.8, p.162. See also ibid. vol.7, p.47, where a Shiʿi gives Fāṭima's name a (false) etymological explanation. Derived from the verb f.ṭ.m., meaning 'to wean,' it is claimed that she was called Fāṭima 'because God weaned people who loved her from hellfire.'

93. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.166; see also vol.7, p.218; and vol.8, p.163, for a positive evaluation of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's learning.

94. As I have discussed it in my earlier work (*Mujtamaʿ al-qarn al-rābiʿ*; see note 1. above), most of al-Tawḥīdī's books are a mirror in which many aspects of the 4th/10th century are reflected. Frequently, these aspects are conveyed through al-Tawḥīdī's presentation of his own opinions of that period's various social groups, such as the jurists, theologians, philosophers, as well as the elite, the commoners, and so forth; see *Mujtamaʿ*, pp.179–256, and my study of his book, *al-Baṣā'ir*, in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.9, pp.298–300.

95. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.5, p.131. Accounts of other encounters that could be taken as jokes are in *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.4, p.233.

96. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.216.

97. Ibid., vol.7, p.216.

98. *Urīdu ḥayātahū wa yurīdu qatlī / ʿadhīraka min khalīlika min murādi.* The connection of this verse with ʿAlī and Ibn Muljam seems to be quite old; see ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī (Beirut, 1983), vol.10, p.154.

99. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, pp.133–134.

100. In *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.3, p.188, al-Tawḥīdī uses the expression 'the Shiʿis' fanatical claims' (*daʿwā'l-shīʿiyya*) as if it were proverbial.

101. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, pp.42–43.

102. *Al-Imtāʿ*, vol.1, p.44; see also vol.2, p.16 '*al-Hajariyyūn.*'

103. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.6, p.217.
104. See *al-Imtāʿ*, vol.2, pp.3–23. In fact, it was al-Tawḥīdī who first attempted to uncover the identity of the founding fathers of this group.
105. *Al-Imtā*, vol.2, p.16.
106. Ibid., vol.2, p.15 (*al-kayd [li-l-dīn]*), p.16 (*al-qaddāḥīn fi'l-Islām*).
107. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.283.
108. *Al-Imtāʿ*, vol.2, p.16; *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.283.
109. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.43.
110. Ibid., vol.7, p.225.
111. Ibid., vol.7, p.166.
112. *Al-Imtāʿ*, vol.2, p.17.
113. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.134.
114. Ibid., vol.8, p.134.
115. For al-Tawḥīdī's humiliation at the hands of al-Ṣāḥib, see *Akhlāq*, pp.85, 141, 306, 311, 493 and *passim*. The book, which is mainly a satire of al-Ṣāḥib and another contemporaneous vizier, has many stories about al-Ṣāḥib's humiliation of visitors to his court from the intellectuals and the literati of the time; see, for examples, ibid., pp.94–104, 111–143, 369.
116. See the quote from al-Dhahabī in Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyya'l-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw (Cairo, 1967), vol.5, p.287. Al-Tawḥīdī himself hints to this in his *Imtāʿ*,' vol.3, p.227.
117. *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.8, p.134.
118. See *al-Baṣā'ir*, vol.7, p.216; vol.8, p.134.
119. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī*, pp.10–11.

Part 2

Memorializing, Remembering and Forgetting

9

Balʿamī's Account of Early Islamic History

Elton L. Daniel

The famous 'translation,' or what would better be called 'adaptation,' by Abū 'Alī Balʿamī of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* presents a great variety of textual and interpretative problems.[1] The value of the work as a historical source, although not inconsiderable, is open to debate in view of the availability of Ṭabarī's Arabic text. In terms of its *historiographical* significance, however, it is a work of great importance, which deserves much further study in this regard. Not only does Balʿamī's work mark the beginning of historical writing in the New Persian language, the rather unique circumstances surrounding its commissioning and composition, as well as the many puzzling discrepancies between it and the text it was supposedly reproducing, offer significant opportunities for gaining insights into questions pertaining to the motivations, perspectives and methods of the early Muslim historian.

The so-called *Tarjama-yi tārīkh-i Ṭabarī* was a work expressly sanctioned by the ruler of a major Muslim state, the Sāmānid Amīr Manṣūr b. Nūḥ, to provide a Persian version of the most highly regarded of the Arabic chronicles.[2] It was prepared by a high

ranking official of that state, the vizier Abū ʿAlī Balʿamī, who had access to the resources of what was probably the best and most extensive library then in existence.[3] Balʿamī began the project in 352/963, barely 40 years after Ṭabarī's death in 310/923, and completed it before Manṣūr's death in 365/976 (or no later than 363/974, if that is the correct date for Balʿamī's own death).[4] By his own acknowledgment, the author took it on himself to abridge, rearrange, supplement and even critique the book he was supposed to be translating.[5]

This immediately raises numerous questions of historiographical interest: exactly what did Balʿamī choose to omit (or add) and why? When he felt it necessary to supplement or challenge Ṭabarī, what sources did he prefer to use? To what extent did the variations Balʿamī introduced reflect his own particular interests or concerns? Perhaps most importantly, given the philological obscurities to be encountered in the Arabic text and Ṭabarī's equally opaque interpretation of historical events, what did Balʿamī understand Ṭabarī to be saying, and how closely does his understanding of the text correspond to that of contemporary historians?

Unfortunately, there are formidable problems involved in trying to answer such questions. It is not simply a matter of making side-by-side comparisons of two standard texts. Although there are now published editions of both works, it is not clear how closely they correspond to the authors' original texts.[6] There are so many manuscripts of Balʿamī's history, in several distinct if often jumbled recensions, that a truly definitive reconstruction of the source text is probably not possible.[7] In the case of Ṭabarī's much more voluminous history, relatively few manuscripts have survived, and it is only with difficulty that a complete set can be assembled. Not all of the best manuscripts were used for the printed editions, and surviving versions of the text, both in the manuscripts and the edited versions, may be defective in other respects as well.[8] The textual distinction between the two works may also be blurred by the fact that their editors sometimes made use of the counterpart texts to establish their readings of difficult passages.[9] Strictly speaking, then, one may readily compare the published versions

of both texts, but one must be cautious about attributing the results of those comparisons to the intentions of the original authors.

Several strategies are used here to minimize these difficulties. First of all, the sections chosen for the purpose of comparison are restricted to those covering the life of Muḥammad and the caliphate of Abū Bakr. These sections are comparable in size between the two works and have not been subjected to the extensive abridgment or expansion that is characteristic of other parts of Balʿamī's work.[10] It can be assumed that the material covered in these sections was so relatively well-established in a canonical form by Balʿamī's time, so familiar to any Muslim audience, and so sensitive from a religious point of view, that such differences as exist between the Arabic and Persian texts would likely be infrequent, highly visible and not introduced lightly. Finally, special attention has been given to those points at which the translator of the Persian text (presumably Balʿamī himself, although possibly a redactor) has specifically noted that something has been added, deleted or modified, which minimizes the likelihood that a difference is due purely to a copyist's error or other accident of textual transmission.

Balʿamī and Ṭabarī's accounts in these sections are quite similar in terms of their general construction: they treat the birth of the Prophet in the context of discussions of the reign of Khusraw Anūshīrwān and then resume the history of the Sasanid kings, followed by an extensive biography of the Prophet, the selection of Abū Bakr as caliph, the wars of apostasy, and the beginning of the wars of expansion. The most obvious difference between the texts is methodological. Balʿamī largely dispenses with the practice of providing fragmentary and multiple bits of information prefaced by chains of authority (*isnād*s) in favour of a continuous narrative. This is to be expected since the preface makes clear that these would be dropped in the interest of clarity and economy of space (whether this might also conceal some more subtle historiographical purpose must remain outside the scope of the present study). Another potentially significant, and perhaps related, difference is structural: at the appropriate juncture in the life of the Prophet, Ṭabarī introduces the system of dating by *hijra*

years and then proceeds in a strict annalistic fashion thereafter (which, as is well known, leads to many jarring interruptions and repetitions in his narrative), while Balʿamī continues to use a dynastic and episodic, rather than annalistic, organization for his material.

As it turns out, however, the differences between the texts are by no means confined to questions of form and method, and the substantive discrepancies that occur, in numbers too great for a comprehensive discussion here, can be both mystifying and suggestive. One striking example of this may be found in the respective sections dealing with the Battle of Badr. Both Ṭabarī and Balʿamī discuss the introduction of the practice of the Ramaḍān fast in similar fashion, but then Balʿamī makes the transition to the next topic by saying:

> In this same month of Ramaḍān, on Friday the seventeenth, the Prophet went out to give battle at Badr, and God gave him victory over the polytheists of Mecca. This is called the Battle of Badr. The history of this battle is extremely important, but it has not been reported in detail by Muḥammad b. Jarīr in this work. However, it is known from the accounts of the Prophet's expeditions and from the commentaries on the Qur'an, for no other campaign of the Prophet has had as many verses revealed concerning it as this one. This was the first victory for Islam and the first victory of the Prophet over the polytheists. In addition to what is in this book, we have thus appended, as best we can, the material to complete the story from the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* and the *Tafsīr*.[11]

Balʿamī then proceeds to give a very long and detailed account of Badr amounting to some forty pages in the printed edition.[12]

The first problem raised by this passage is the obvious question of why Balʿamī would say that Ṭabarī gives a deficient account of the Battle of Badr. Extant copies of Ṭabarī actually give a treatment of Badr which is longer than the one Balʿamī produces and really does not differ much from it in terms of factual content. It seems, then, that either Balʿamī was deliberately falsifying his characterization of Ṭabarī (an easily detectable lie which would serve no obvious purpose), or he, with the considerable resources of the Sāmānid state at his disposal, was working from a manuscript

of Ṭabarī's history which was either grossly defective (unlikely, given the pains to which the Sāmānids went to acquire copies of Ṭabarī's work[13]) or quite different from the text that has come down to us. This is a dramatic, but hardly isolated, example of the single most puzzling aspect of the relationship between these two works and a problem which will constantly recur in any analysis of them, i.e., indications that the text of Ṭabarī as known to Balʿamī was markedly different from that known to us today.

Assuming Balʿamī is being truthful about what he found in Ṭabarī's work, this section is particularly important in that it gives us an opportunity to see how Balʿamī might have gone about his duty if his task had been to produce an independent history instead of what has often been dismissed as a 'mere translation.' He indicates explicitly what he considers the essential sources for addressing the historical topic involved, and it can be seen what he assembles from them and how he constructs the narrative as opposed to that of the master Ṭabarī; and it is obvious that in all respects he acquits himself very well. As indicated earlier, the basic account he gives turns out to be remarkably similar to what is in fact found in Ṭabarī. The major difference is that Balʿamī makes a more extensive effort to attach historical anecdotes to Qurʾanic verses: he does this about twice as often as Ṭabarī does[14] (this tendency is not as pronounced but still noticeable in other sections of Balʿamī's work). Whether this was because he was making a systematic effort to discourage speculative, theological or allegorical interpretation of the Qurʾan in favour of historical exegesis, or simply because he turned to a *tafsīr* as a source is difficult to say.[15] It is also noteworthy that Balʿamī makes it clear that he is not adding material arbitrarily; he has a clear sense of the historical importance and significance of the event (something rarely evident, or at least made explicit, in Ṭabarī's work) and uses this as a rationale for his modification of the text.

The preceding is, of course, a case where Balʿamī indicates a major difference in his text that otherwise would probably not even be noticed today. However, there are also important instances where Balʿamī does not indicate that there is any particular difference between the version he is giving and what is found in

Ṭabarī, when in fact the two texts are significantly different. For example, Balʿamī introduces his account of the birth of Muḥammad at exactly the same point in the narrative as Ṭabarī had done, but the fundamental difference between them may be gleaned from the opening sentences: Ṭabarī, citing Ibn Isḥāq, says: 'The Messenger of God and I myself [the source of the *ḥadīth*] were born in the Year of the Elephant.'[16] Balʿamī, however, puts it this way: 'The Prophet said, I was born in the time of the Just King, i.e., Khusraw Anūshīrwān. That was in the Year of the Elephant.'[17] Balʿamī then goes on to repeat most of what Ṭabarī said about Muḥammad's childhood, but elects to move some of the material regarding omens of the fall of the Persian empire, which Ṭabarī gave under the end of the reign of Anūshīrwān, to this section. There is no way of being certain whether Balʿamī was deliberately changing the wording (and trumping the source) of Ṭabarī's opening sentence or this is something that has dropped or been edited out of Ṭabarī's text. Assuming that Balʿamī in this case was making an unacknowledged modification of the text, his motive seems clear enough and is reinforced by the other changes he makes. Here and elsewhere, he emphasizes strongly the idea that events in Arabia and Sasanian Persia were already interconnected before the rise of Islam; they are part of the same history. This may well have been Ṭabarī's point too, but, if so, it is obscured either because of his method or the handling of his text.

In any case, it does appear from these bits of evidence that whatever Balʿamī was translating was not in all respects the text of Ṭabarī as it is found in the Leiden edition: we are told that things are missing which are in fact there, and we find additions that do not appear there. Is there any way of knowing, then, how faithfully Balʿamī was reproducing the text he had in front of him, or just how different it was from the contemporary version of Ṭabarī's work? At least in the sections of Balʿamī considered here, there is some material that might be useful in this regard.

Rather surprisingly, since Balʿamī is widely assumed to have been producing a 'dumbed-down' version of Ṭabarī for sluggards who could only read Persian, there is an abundance of Arabic quotations to be found in his work, which suggests he expected

that his audience would in fact be able to understand and appreciate such material. These include copious quotations from the Qur'an (which are rarely accompanied by Persian translations or explanations, perhaps an indication that the text was prepared without access to the Persian translation of the Qur'an to be found in the Persian version of Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* that was also being undertaken by Sāmānid scholars), as well as numerous specimens of Arabic poetry, rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) and even plain prose. Some of these Arabic passages are to be found in Ṭabarī, and they thus provide a means of verifying either (1) how accurately Balʿamī quoted the Arabic, or (2) how well the Arabic has been preserved in the transmission process. In the case of the Arabic poetry, there are some eighteen verses in this section which occur in the same context in both Ṭabarī and Balʿamī. In every case they match exactly or with only minor discrepancies that can be easily explained as orthographical or copyists' errors.[18] While this could be due in part to editing by Nöldeke or Rawshan, there is no indication in the respective critical apparati that this is the case. It is also not the case in one example where the Balʿamī manuscripts have preserved a reading of the Arabic that turns out to be more probable than that found in any of the extant Arabic manuscripts or that could be determined by the Leiden editors. It occurs in a particularly intriguing section of Balʿamī's text dealing with the wars of apostasy, where he, perhaps even more than Ṭabarī, emphasizes the importance of the female pseudo-prophets Salmā and Sajāḥ and the highly charged sexual atmosphere which surrounded the encounter of Sajāḥ and Musaylima. The lewd exchanges in rhymed prose between Sajāḥ and Musaylima are quoted in Arabic in Balʿamī (whether out of modesty, like the early translators of Ṭabarī who used Latin to preserve a sense of decorum, or some other reason is difficult to say). In one of them, Musaylima uses an obscure and crude, presumably slang, Arabic term, which the Leiden editors could not reconstruct properly. It was corrected by M.A. Ibrāhīm in the Cairo edition (from *fuʿs* to *quʿs*) on the basis of an explanation of the word in the *Aghānī*.[19] Remarkably, that word was, however, preserved in exactly that form in the Balʿamī manuscript used by Rawshan,[20] which perhaps constitutes rather striking

evidence for the basic fidelity of Balʿamī to the text in front of him and is certainly a blow against the myth that Persian manuscripts are inherently more liable to corruption than Arabic ones.

In another case, however, Balʿamī explicitly notes that he has added some verses himself. In discussing the history of Sayf b. Dhī Yazan and the Persian commander Wahriz in Yaman, Balʿamī states: 'A poet named Umayya b. [Abi'l-]Ṣalt, of the tribe of Thaqīf, composed an ode praising [Sayf] greatly, of which Muḥammad b. Jarīr reported only two or three verses, but we will give all twelve.'[21] In point of fact, the cited verses are in the extant Ṭabarī text, much as Balʿamī gives them.[22] This is just as puzzling as Balʿamī's claim that there is a lack of discussion of the Battle of Badr in Ṭabarī. What possible reason could Balʿamī have had for saying these verses were not there if Ṭabarī had in fact included them? On the other hand, what are the chances that he happened to put back in exactly the same selection of verses that would have been found in a better manuscript than the one at his disposal? Conversely, how plausible is it that someone familiar with Balʿamī could have inserted these verses into one of the Ṭabarī manuscripts that have come down to us? There does not seem to be any simple explanation for this oddity.

An equally interesting and much more difficult aspect of this problem arises from the fact that there are also Arabic passages which are found *only* in Balʿamī. Disregarding quotations from the Qur'an, these include at least twelve lines of Arabic poetry and a piece of prose called the *Waṣiyat-nāma-yi Bū Bakr*, in which Abū Bakr designates ʿUmar as the man best suited to succeed him (the text of the document, despite the Persian title, is given in Arabic).[23] Since there is no indication that Balʿamī was taking these quotations from another Arabic source (he acknowledges these in other cases), nor any obvious reason why he would be adding Arabic passages to what was supposed to be a Persian work, should such material be regarded as examples of potential lacunae in extant texts of Ṭabarī, added either by Balʿamī or later copyists familiar with now lost manuscripts of Ṭabarī's chronicle? If Balʿamī did add so much Arabic material on his own, we have

the question of why. Was it simply for aesthetics, or was there some more subtle reason?

This is a very difficult problem to resolve, as may be illustrated by comparing the respective passages in Ṭabarī and Balʿamī on the etymology of the name of the tribe Quraysh. Ṭabarī relates several explanations, one of which states that 'others say that Quraysh were so called after a creature that lives in the sea and eats other sea creatures, namely the shark (*qirsh*), the most powerful of sea creatures.' He then gives another tradition that indicates the name is related to the word *taqrīsh* (inquiry) and cites a verse to support the point. [24] The parallel passage in Balʿamī reads:

> It was because of these inquiries that Quṣayy received the name of Quraysh. Others claim that Quraysh is the name of a sea creature, the most powerful of all that inhabit the sea, whether fish or other animals. Since Quṣayy and his people had gained the upper hand over the Khuzāʿa, they were called Quraysh metaphorically. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās recited the following verse on this subject [given by Balʿamī in Arabic]: *wa quraysh hiya allatī yaskun al-baḥr/bi-hā summiyyat qurayshun qurayshan.*[25]

Thus, in Balʿamī the sequence of the arguments is reversed; Ṭabarī's supporting verse in favour of the derivation from *taqrīsh* is dropped, and one in favour of the shark as the totem of Quraysh adduced instead. Are these changes deliberate or accidents of transmission? Was the shark verse actually in Ṭabarī but lost in the manuscripts that have come down to us (it would easily fit in the context and Balʿamī makes no suggestion that he has added it)? Did Ṭabarī himself make these modifications in revisions of his work? If the modifications were deliberate, by whatever party, what significance should be attached to them? At this point, any attempt at an answer would be purely speculative.

Apart from the textual problems, which are impossible to resolve without knowing more precisely the content of the Ṭabarī manuscripts which Balʿamī had at his disposal, attention may also be given to an area where one can be more certain that differences between the texts are due to true historiographical concerns and not just accidents of manuscript transmission – that is,

instances where Balʿamī explicitly and accurately indicates what Ṭabarī has said, but then proceeds to disagree with it. In most cases, these seem to be quibbling over details and serve no apparent purpose (beyond, perhaps, showing Balʿamī's preference for the *Maghāzī* as a source, a perfectionist desire to correct every perceived deficiency, or simply a bit of one-upmanship).

For example, Balʿamī found Ṭabarī's account of the emigration to Ethiopia defective. He writes:

> Muḥammad b. Jarīr says in this book that there were 72 people who emigrated to Ethiopia. According to other traditions and the *Kitāb-i maghāzī*,[26] their number was 120, including adults and children. Some say that wives went with their husbands, and the men who took their wives with them included ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, Saʿd b. Abi'l-Waqqāṣ, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, and other unknown individuals. All of this is found in the traditions of the *Maghāzī*.[27]

In actuality, Ṭabarī's account is more complex than this. He cites one tradition that the first band of emigrants comprised eleven men and four women and then others which indicate the number eventually swelled to 82 (not 72). He does not share Balʿamī's apparent interest in the number of women who went to Ethiopia, and his various lists of the male emigrants are quite different from the one given by Balʿamī (who states, for example, that ʿAmmār b. Yāsir went to Ethiopia, while Ṭabarī says that this is doubtful).[28] This dispute over the number of emigrants seems rather trivial, but there is also another, more interesting, variation between the accounts. Balʿamī appears to think that Ṭabarī had underplayed the harmonious nature of Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia at the time: 'There were numerous discussions, courteous and friendly, between the Nijāshī and the Muslims on the subject of Islam and Christianity, which are reported in the *Maghāzī*, and which Muḥammad b. Jarīr does not mention.'[29]

Some of Balʿamī's other additions and critiques may have had an ideological foundation. On the supposed attempt by Zaynab bint Ḥārith to poison the Prophet after the Battle of Fadak, for example, Balʿamī explains:

> This is the way the story is told by Muḥammad b. Jarīr. In the *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, it is reported differently. The correct version is this: When the Prophet brought the morsel to his mouth, God gave speech to the roast lamb, and it said, 'Do not eat my flesh, for I am poisoned.' This was one of the greatest miracles of the Prophetic mission of Muḥammad. Gabriel came and told him, 'Spit out the morsel from your mouth.' According to another version ... .'[30]

At first glance, this may seem to be an example of what some critics have seen as Balʿamī's attempt to popularize and vulgarize Ṭabarī's text (dismissing his work as 'fabelhafte').[31] However, it may also be explained as the result of Balʿamī's efforts to include material from alternative sources, including an unknown *Qiṣaṣ al-anbīyā'*, as well as to his sifting of the material to conform to his own idealized conception of prophethood. The latter tendency is particularly noticeable in Balʿamī's account of Muḥammad's *hijra* from Mecca to Medina, which is at odds with Ṭabarī's account in many ways.[32] Balʿamī objected in particular to Ṭabarī's report of the construction of the first mosque in Medina:

> Muḥammad b. Jarīr reports something which cannot be accepted. He says, 'When Muḥammad arrived in Medina, he had a mosque constructed at the site of a date orchard and a cemetery which he had purchased. He had the trees dug up and took the corpses out of their tombs; then they built it.'[33] But this cannot be; it is an extraordinary act, and one must not say or believe such a thing about the Prophet. Even though the dead were infidels, [building] a place of worship does not warrant dragging the dead from their tombs and destroying a cultivated field. Intelligent men reject such tales.'[34]

Some other divergences between the texts over seemingly minor details may also point to differences in politico-religious orientations. One such example may be found in Ṭabarī's story of the covert mission of Ḥajjāj b. ʿIlāṭ al-Sulamī. Having converted to Islam after the fall of Khaybar, he had gone to Mecca to retrieve his property, using as a ruse the false story that Muḥammad had been defeated and captured at Khaybar, news which is supposed to have upset ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib when he heard it.[35] Balʿamī hastens to object that 'this tradition is not correct':

ʿAbbās had embraced Islam on the day of Badr and was then living with the Prophet in Medina, so he could not then have been in Mecca as Ṭabarī's account alleges.[36] The question of the conversion of the eponym of the Abbasid dynasty was obviously a contentious one, and Balʿamī's concern to avoid any implication that ʿAbbās was a tardy convert would seem to indicate a pro-Abbasid stance on his part and, by implication, not on Ṭabarī's.

Balʿamī is generally regarded as a staunch Sunni and respected Shafiʿī religious scholar (in a predominately Ḥanafī milieu).[37] It would appear that he came to have serious questions about Ṭabarī's orthodoxy from this point of view. This may be indicated, for example, by the inclusion of the *Waṣiyat-nāma-yi Bū Bakr* in his text, as well as his embellished account of the conversion of ʿUmar: 'Muḥammad b. Jarīr has not reported in his book the conversion of ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb, which is a pleasing story. I am going to report it as I have read it in other books, just as I have just reported the conversion of Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq.' His placement of this anecdote is also carefully calculated to bolster the importance of ʿUmar's conversion as the prelude to the public proclamation of Islam in Mecca.[38]

Also interesting in this regard is Balʿamī's treatment of the particularly sensitive question of the hierarchy of male converts to Islam. On the basis of the current text of Ṭabarī and in the view of most modern authorities, Ṭabarī seems to have handled this problem with his usual scholarly caution. He began by mentioning several traditions about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib being the first male convert, but then he discussed the case for Abū Bakr, citing Ibn Isḥāq and other sources, and also gave a few traditions in support of Zayd.[39] Yet this becomes the subject of one of the most vehement criticisms of Ṭabarī to be found in Balʿamī's work. This passage is not well represented in the Rawshan edition of the text, but it is quite apparent in several of the more important Balʿamī manuscripts and is preserved in full in the Zotenberg translation. It may be a later insertion, but if it is genuinely by Balʿamī, it fully corroborates depictions of him as a rigid Sunni – and reinforces questions that have been raised about Ṭabarī's religious orthodoxy as well as his scholarly neutrality.[40] According to Balʿamī:

> Muḥammad b. Jarīr says in this work that Zayd b. Ḥāritha, the Prophet's freedman, embraced Islam before Abū Bakr, who was converted only after fifty people had become Muslims.[41] This report has no foundation; it is contradicted by all the traditionists and by all the believers, who report that the first [male] convert was Abū Bakr; after him came Zayd b. Ḥāritha, the Prophet's freedman; then Bilāl, Abū Bakr's slave [sic]; then several others, who successively embraced Islam in secret. Ḥasan b. Thābit composed some verses eulogizing Abū Bakr because he had believed before all the others [quotation of three verses follow].
>
> I have read in all the traditions that Abū Bakr, after his conversion, kept his faith secret; but any time he met with someone at the mosque he spoke to him and encouraged him to become a Muslim; he took those who accepted to the Prophet, and they made the pronouncement of faith. The first one converted by Abū Bakr was ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān; then he converted ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, then Zubayr b. ʿAwwām, then Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbaydallāh, then Saʿd b. Abi'l-Waqqāṣ. He thus made thirty-nine converts, who kept their faith secret.[42]

On the other hand, it should be noted that many passages favourable to ʿAlī may also be found in Balʿamī. In his discussion of the attack on Khaybar, he notes that: 'Muḥammad b. Jarīr reports in his work that Marḥab was killed by Muḥammad b. Maslama, after Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām had cut his leg; since, he says, ʿAlī, afflicted with an eye ailment, did not participate in the battle. But this version is incorrect; the truth is that Marḥab was killed by ʿAlī.'[43]

Apart from the sectarian angle, there is one other point on which Balʿamī appears to have had a very fundamental disagreement with Ṭabarī: the conception of history, chronology and cosmology that underlay his work. This may well be the single greatest point of difference between the two, and one which needs much further research to evaluate properly.

In discussing the establishment of the dating system of the Hijra, Ṭabarī gives one report that this practice was established by the Prophet, then another that 'Umar was responsible for it, and finally a number of miscellaneous and loosely related traditions. He himself adds that 'the account given by ʿAlī b. Mujāhid

[implying ʿUmar started the era] is not far from the truth.'[44] Balʿamī, on the other hand, gives a very different version, rejecting what he believes to be Ṭabarī's conclusion and laying out a rational basis for doing so. He states:

> Muḥammad b. Jarīr has said in this book, according to a tradition, that it was not the Prophet himself who established this era; that, at the time of the Prophet, people did not count by years, and that this era was established after him. Some claim that it was fixed in the time of Abū Bakr, by his lieutenant in Yaman, named Yaʿlā b. Umayya. Others say that it was established by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb [who investigated various systems of dating and then settled on the Hijra Era]….'[45]

Balʿamī objects to this, noting:

> Traditionists and chronologists have reason to regard the first version [i.e., the establishment by the Prophet] as correct. In fact, an era is something that is generally known, that could not be ignored by anyone, and ʿUmar knew about this usage. It is well established in traditions that the Arabs counted from the Year of the Elephant and from the construction of the Kaʿba. It is thus not possible that the Prophet neglected this usage, or that ʿUmar had to be informed about it, for it to be established….
>
> Since the Prophet regulated the year and the months, how could he have neglected the era? The version of Muḥammad b. Jarīr is contested by scholars. The true era was established by the Prophet. It still exists today, for since the *hijra* no more important event has occurred that would have constituted a reason to have changed it.
>
> I have seen a group of Shiʿis in Baghdad who told me that they count the years from the death of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, because that was a serious event, when the blood of Ḥusayn and some of his children was spilled on the ground. This [choice of an] era is explained by the fact that men always take as the commencement of an era some significant event that has occurred among them. Then, too, I have heard it said in Baghdad that in Syria, in the hamlets of Damascus, there are Nāṣibīs, men who are rigid in their sectarianism [*madhhab*] and who are enemies of ʿAlī and who have an extreme devotion to Muʿāwiya. They count, not from the *hijra*, but from the date of death of Muʿāwiya.[46] The reason for this is again as I have said.

> Thus, the Prophet established the Hijra Era, because the *hijra* is a significant event for Muslims, and since then no event more important has occurred. It is for this reason the Muslims follow the *hijra* era.
>
> The Magians have an era commencing with the year when Yazdijard b. Shahriyār was killed.[47]

Ṭabarī's view on the establishment of the Hijra Era has of course been endorsed as eminently reasonable by any number of modern scholars, including W. Montgomery Watt, who writes that it is 'improbable that Muhammad was concerned about this matter' and 'almost certainly true' that it should be attributed to ʿUmar.[48] Then why did Balʿamī object so strongly and insist emphatically that the era was established by Muḥammad rather than ʿUmar? It is obvious that Balʿamī has a positive view of ʿUmar from his insertion of the story of ʿUmar's conversion, so there can be no question of his trying to demean or undermine that caliph's reputation. It could be due to the tendency in Balʿamī, as noted earlier, to exalt the personality of the Prophet, but one may also reflect a more fundamental concern. To attribute the introduction of the Hijra Era to ʿUmar suggests that the feeling of a need for change of era became apparent only after, and was thus somehow connected to, the fall of the Sasanian empire; Balʿamī, as has already been suggested, is at pains to emphasize that the rise of Islam is a development *within* Persian history and an intrinsic part of it, not external to it, and so he would tend to reject this implication.

Chronology, *ta'rīkh*, is literally at the heart of early Islamic historical writing, and it is here that the most basic historiographical assumptions of Balʿamī and Ṭabarī appear to be in conflict. One of the features that sharply distinguishes the two main recensions of Balʿamī's work is the preface, an Arabic one in some manuscripts and a different Persian one in others. Manuscripts with the Persian preface (but usually not those with the Arabic preface) typically include a section called the *Rūzgar-i ʿālam*, explictly stated not to be found in Ṭabarī.[49] Since the Persian preface is an indicator of a later redaction, this tends to suggest that this *Rūzgar* section was not composed by Balʿamī but his redactors ('we' rather than 'I' in the text), but this impression may be mistaken as it

turns out that this section is repeated in a somewhat different form later in the text. Before moving from Sasanian to Islamic history, both Ṭabarī and Balʿamī include a section on comparative chronology. Alluding to the *Rūzgar-i ʿālam* section, Balʿamī (or whoever the author may have been) writes:

> We have already spoken about this subject at the beginning of this work. We will return to it with more details, because Muḥammad b. Jarīr has treated it in this place.
>
> Know that the Jews claim that 4,340 years have passed from the time when Adam was put on the earth to the birth of our Prophet. They said that this is confirmed in the Torah. From the birth of the Prophet until his prophetic mission, there was an interval of 40 years; from his mission to his *hijra*, 10 years; he spent 13 years in Medina. The Christians claim that there have been 6,313 years from Adam to Muḥammad. These two numbers cannot be reconciled. It is likely that the calculation reported on the authority of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās is more precise. Ibn ʿAbbās said: 2,256 years elapsed from the time of Adam to Noah; 1,079 years from the flood to Abraham; 565 years from Abraham to Moses; 536 years from Moses to Solomon, son of David, who built the temple of Jerusalem; 717 years from Solomon to Alexander Dhu'l-Qarnayn; 369 years from Alexander Dhu'l-Qarnayn to Jesus; and from Jesus to Muḥammad, 551 years. It is generally claimed that from Jesus to our Prophet Muḥammad there were no other prophets, but the words of God are closer to the truth which say, 'When we sent them two prophets, they accused them of lying; we sent them a third, and these three prophets said: For sure, we have been sent to you.'[50] That which corresponds to the time after Jesus, which lasted 434 years, is the period one calls the *fatra*. Now, during this period of time, there was no revelation, but it must be conceded that the world did not remain without a manifestation of the Divine. Now, at that time, there were numerous disciples of Jesus dispersed throughout the world who summoned men to God. If the world remained for one instant without a manifestation of the Divine, anyone who died during that period, since God had not manifested Himself, would not go to Hell. One must thus admit that God does not leave the world without a manifestation of the Divine.
>
> As for the disagreement in the chronology of the period which

> extends from Adam to the present, it will never be resolved by men. This disagreement rests on what we have mentioned at the beginning of this work, to wit: All are in accord that from Adam to the Day of Resurrection there are 7000 years. If one knew exactly how many years had elapsed since Adam to the present day, one would also know when the Day of Resurrection would be. God has not made this known to anyone, as it says in the Qur'an. It is because of this that no one knows how many years have elapsed, nor how many remain. Thus the different opinions. But there is no disagreement on our own chronology. There were 40 years from the birth of Muḥammad to the beginning of his Prophetic mission, and 23 years from his mission until his death. Some say he stayed 13 years in Mecca and 10 years in Medina; others that he stayed 10 years in Mecca and 13 in Medina.[51]

There are a number of complicated discrepancies, at least partly attributable to copyists' errors, between the chronology as given in this section and the earlier *Rūzgar* section, and many more between those and what is found in Ṭabarī (an attempt to summarize them may be found in the Table 1). Probably the most striking and significant difference is the way in which a tradition relegated to 'some authorities' by Ṭabarī becomes the central tradition in Balʿamī's text and is attributed by him to Ibn ʿAbbās.

What was it that so worried Balʿamī about Ṭabarī's account of world chronological systems? The answer seems to be in the conclusion Ṭabarī drew from the material, which represents, perhaps, the fundamental ideological conception behind his work. Ṭabarī, unlike Balʿamī, emphasizes not the complex and contradictory systems of the Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, but what he describes as a chronology determined by Muslim scholars and based on cycles of a thousand years between major prophets: Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, etc.[52] However, only 600 years had elapsed between Jesus and Muhammad; since Ṭabarī and Balʿamī were writing almost 300 years later, the thousand-year cycle was obviously drawing to an end. If Muḥammad was the last of the prophets, what could happen at the end of that cycle other than the end of the world? Ṭabarī as much as admits this conclusion:

> … The entire duration in time of this present world is, according to Wahb [b. Munabbih], 6,000 years, of which there had elapsed up to his own time, in his view, 5,600 years. Wahb b. Munabbih died in 114 [732]. *Thus the remaining duration of the world from our present time is, on the basis of Wahb's words, 215 years* [emphasis added]. This is what Wahb b. Munabbih says, on the basis of what Abū Ṣāliḥ transmitted from Ibn ʿAbbās.[53]

It is to reject this uncomfortable view entirely that Balʿamī chooses to interpret the divergence of chronological systems as a part of a divine plan to obscure human knowledge of eschatology. By attributing to Muḥammad himself a statement that the positions of the stars had returned to the place they held at the beginning of creation, he emphasized that the beginning of the Islamic era was different from other cycles and the opening of a period of indefinite duration. He thus escaped the dilemma of seeming to predict either the imminent demise of the world or the scheduled appearance of a new prophet, perhaps an acute concern at the time given the activities of the Ismaili *daʿwa* in Transoxiana in the late Sāmānid period.

A number of hypotheses may thus be adduced from this small sampling of the Ṭabarī and Balʿamī texts.

First, there is reason to believe that scholars working on early Islamic history may have been extremely naïve in trusting that the Arabic texts on which such studies must be based have been transmitted more or less intact. Clearly, the case of Ṭabarī and Balʿamī suggests that the textual integrity of those works is suspect in numerous ways that are difficult to assess. We have cases where Balʿamī specifically says that something is in Ṭabarī which cannot be found in the Leiden edition; conversely we have cases where Balʿamī specifically states that something is *not* in Ṭabarī, but the extant text does have something on that topic or point. This is in addition to the countless instances where Balʿamī's history differs, without giving any particular acknowledgement, from the content or arrangement of the extant Ṭabarī. Taken together, the problem of these discrepancies cannot be solved simply by ascribing them to the possibility that Balʿamī may have been working from a defective manuscript. Because dozens of manuscripts of

Balʿamī's history, transcribed over the period of several centuries, are available, one can see in graphic detail the constant tinkering that has been done to the text over the years; if there were more Ṭabarī manuscripts in existence, it is likely that one would find that it too has been doctored by hands unknown and in ways that need investigation.

Second, from the examples cited, it is possible to form an impression of Balʿamī's character as a historian and, as a result, conclude that dismissals of his work as unoriginal, unimportant or unreliable are ill-founded. He detected inadequacies in Ṭabarī's account, and it is possible to see how he went about rectifying them. He provides evidence about the sources he thought appropriate for addressing the historical problems before him. Most important, he thinks as a true historian: he evaluates, he makes judgments about the significance of events, he does not report whatever he happens to know about an event but selectively arranges and organizes the material. He maintains a proportion between the treatment he thinks a topic deserves and its historical importance, and he notes controversies and takes positions based on rational interpretation. There are also clearly defined conceptual underpinnings to what he has to say.

Finally, this kind of inquiry not only provides a better historiographical understanding of Balʿamī's work, but it also makes it possible to learn more about Ṭabarī's work and the way it was understood in the historical imagination of a near contemporary. Virtually everyone who has studied Ṭabarī has been somewhat puzzled by both the structure of his work (the rigid insistence on an annalistic approach for the Islamic period) and his methodology (citing one obscure or contradictory anecdote after another without ever seeming to arrive at any kind of conclusion). Among modern critics, the charitable interpretation of this is to laud Ṭabarī's meticulousness and judiciousness, as if he were a veritable von Ranke of objectivity, piling up masses of careful footnotes. Although Balʿamī certainly has a high regard for Ṭabarī, this is not the way he viewed the work. He clearly detected a number of axes being ground, some of which he himself approved. Balʿamī also has a tendency to cut through the maze of conflicting detail

in Ṭabarī to give what he regards as the essential (or desirable) conclusion to be drawn from it. Thus, he did not, for example, think Ṭabarī was just trying to reflect the divergence of Muslim opinion in his treatment of the conversion of Abū Bakr, Zayd, ʿAlī and ʿUmar. In the mind of the author of that passage (Balʿamī or not), Ṭabarī was definitely trying to discredit the prior conversion of Abū Bakr and probably to cast aspersions on ʿUmar as well. Beyond that, Balʿamī also detected a strong millenarian element in Ṭabarī's thinking, in which the shift from a cyclical and dynastic conception of pre-Islamic history to a linear model of Islamic history, with its year by year approach, seemed to mark a countdown to the imminent end of the world, a notion which Balʿamī, and perhaps others at the Sāmānid court, felt compelled to refute repeatedly, at length, and in detail.

Table 9.1
Comparative Chronology in Balʿamī and Ṭabarī

	First *Ruzgār* Section	Second Chronology	Ṭabarī
Jewish Chronology	4,040 years and 3 months from Adam to Muhammad	4,340 years	4,642 years 'and a few months' from when Adam was expelled from Eden to the Hijra
Christian Chronology	Christians: 5,972	Christians: 6,330 years	Christians in Septuagint: 5,992 'and a few months' (numerous other traditions)
Zoroastrian Chronology			4,182 years, 10 months and 19 days
Adam to Noah	2,250 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	2,256 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	2,256 ('some authorities'); 2,200

			(Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
Noah to Abraham	1,079 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	1,079 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	1,079 ('some authorities'); 1,143 (Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
Abraham to Moses	565	565	565 ('some authorities'); 575 (Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
Moses to Solomon	536 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	636 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	636 ('some authorities'); 179 (Moses to David: Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
Solomon to Alexander	717 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	717 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	717 ('some authorities')
Alexander to Jesus	369 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	369 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	369 ('some authorities') Moses to Jesus: 1,900 years (Ibn ʿAbbās); 1,053 (David to Jesus: Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
Jesus to Mohammad	501 with *a fatra* of 434 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	551 (Ibn ʿAbbās)	551 ('some authorities') with *a fatra* of 434 (Ibn ʿAbbās; 600 Kalbī/Ibn ʿAbbās)
(Total)	(6,017)	(6,173)	4,600 (al-Wāqidi); 5,500 (Ibnʿ Abbās); 5,600 (Wahb); 6,113 ('some authorities')

Note: Ṭabarī also cites a tradition from al-Haytham b. ʿAdī giving the years from Adam to the Flood, 2,256; Flood to Abraham, 1,020; Abraham to Jacob, 75; Jacob to Exodus, 430; from the building of the Temple to its destruction, 446; Nebuchadnezzar to Alexander, 436; Alexander to 206 AH (probable date of Ṭabarī's composition), 1,245 years.

Notes

1. See P.A. Griaznevich and A.N. Boldyrev, 'O dvukh redaktsiiakh Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī Balʿamī,' *Sovyetskoye Vostokovedeniye*, 3 (1957), pp.46–59; Elton L. Daniel, 'Manuscripts and Editions of Balʿamī's *Tarjamah-yi Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*,' *JRAS* (1990), pp.282–321.

2. The circumstances which led to the production of the Persian version of al-Ṭabarī are stated in the Arabic and Persian prefaces found at the beginning of various manuscripts, the Arabic preface (unfortunately not found in the edited text) apparently being Balʿamī's original; the respective texts with analysis may be found in Griaznevich and Boldyrev, 'O Dvukh Redaktsiyakh,' pp.48–53.

3. The splendour of the Sāmānid library at Bukhārā is well known from the famous description by Avicenna.

4. The wording of the Arabic preface (in Griaznevich and Boldyrev, 'O dvukh redaktsiiakh,' p.52), apparently by Balʿamī himself and found in what appears to be the earliest and most authentic version of the text, begins with the phrase *sitāyish amīr Abī Ṣāliḥ Manṣūr b. Nūḥ* ('Praise to the Amir Abī Ṣāliḥ Manṣūr b. Nūḥ'), which implies that Manṣūr was still alive when the project was completed. There is conflicting evidence about the date of Balʿamī's death: Abū Saʿīd Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār*, ed. ʿA. Ḥ. Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1347 Sh./1968), p.163, says that he died in 363/974, while ʿUtbī, *al-Taʾrīkh al-yamīnī*, ed. Aḥmad Manīnī (Cairo, 1287/1870), vol.1, p.170, claims (rather implausibly) that he was still alive in 382/992.

5. See the Arabic preface in Griaznevich and Boldyrev, 'O Dvukh Redaktsiyakh,' p.53.

6. The standard edition of Ṭabarī is *Kitāb taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al. (3 series in 15 vols, Leiden, 1879–1901), but useful variants may sometimes be found in the Egyptian editions (13 vols, Cairo, 1908, and ed. M.A. Ibrāhīm, 9 vols, Cairo, 1960–68). New material for reconstructing the text was also brought to bear, although not consistently, on the English translation, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, ed. E. Yarshater (Albany, NY, 1985–2000). All references here are to the Leiden edition unless otherwise noted. The best available editions of Balʿamī's Persian text are *Tārīkh-i Balʿamī: takmila va tarjama-yi tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*, ed. M.T. Bahār and M.P. Gunābadī (Tehran, 1341 Sh./1962) for the pre-Islamic period, and *Tārīkh-nāma-yi Ṭabarī gardānīda mansūb bih Balʿamī*, ed. M. Rawshan (Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987) for the Islamic period. Neither edition gives a completely adequate guide to textual variants found in some key manuscripts; some of these may be gleaned from the

facsimile of the Mashhad manuscript published by M. Mīnuvī as *Tarjama-yi tārīkh-i Ṭabarī* (Tehran, 1344 Sh./1966) and the French translation by H. Zotenberg, *Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mohammed-ben Djarir-ben-Yezid Tabari* (Paris, 1867–74).

7. See Daniel, 'Manuscripts and Editions,' p.308.

8. For an overview of the history of Ṭabarī's text, see F. Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol.1, *General Introduction* (Albany, NY, 1989), pp.135–147.

9. Unlike quite a few other editors and translators of Ṭabarī, the chief editor of this part of the chronicle, Th. Nöldeke, had the very good sense to check his text against one of those Persian manuscripts (MS Gotha, Landesbibliothek 24–25) and used it to clarify some of his readings. It also appears that Rawshan, the editor of the Persian text, made some unacknowledged emendations based on readings taken from the Arabic version of Ṭabarī, e.g., in his spelling of the names of the jinn whom Muḥammad converted to Islam (cf. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.68, with Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1203, and the variants given by Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.2, pp.434–435, which are more in keeping with the actual manuscript tradition). This definitely presents some problems in terms of making an analytical comparison and contrast of the two works since the evidence has been cross-contaminated, so to speak. Every effort has been made here to make sure that readings of passages have not been affected in this way. However, it should be kept in mind that Rawshan relied heavily on MS Istanbul, Fâtih 4285, which is an unusual manuscript in terms of its closeness to Ṭabarī's text; it is not yet clear whether this is due to modification by a copyist who was familiar with the Arabic original or because it is a more faithful reproduction of Bal'amī's original text (see Daniel, 'Manuscripts and Editions,' p.290).

10. In the Leiden edition of Ṭabarī, this extends from vol.1, pp.966–2137, somewhat more a thousand pages (although a chunk of this material is on late Sasanian rulers and is not considered here). In Bal'amī, it spans the last 200 pages of the Bahār edition and the first 430 pages of the Rawshan edition (corresponding to I, vol.1, pp.233–530, and 3:1–361 of the Zotenberg translation). In terms of word count (relatively low per page in the Leiden edition), it can be seen that in this case the two accounts are comparable in size, unlike the extensive abridgement characteristic of later sections of Bal'amī's work.

11. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.106. Although the first reference to books on exegesis and the Prophet's campaigns seems to be generic in nature, the second is given as a reference to specific books,

presumably al-Wāqidī's *Kitāb al-maghāzī* and Ṭabarī's own *Tafsīr*, which was also being adapted into Persian by Sāmānid authorities.

12. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.107–146.

13. There is a record of the trouble that was taken to obtain a copy of Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, importing it from Baghdad, in the Persian translation that was made of it: *Tarjama-yi Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī*, ed. Ḥ. Yaghmā'ī (Tehran, 2536[=1356] Sh./1977), vol.1, p.5. Reliance on a clearly defective manuscript also seems inconsistent with reports of the excellence of the Sāmānid libraries.

14. There are roughly 15 verses mentioned by Ṭabarī (grouping the largest number of sections as part of his treatment of Badr) as opposed to 35 by Bal'amī.

15. The latter possibility is intriguing since we know, of course, that the translation of Ṭabarī's own *Tafsīr* was being prepared at about the same time, and the relationship between Bal'amī's work and that of the committee handling the translation of the *Tafsīr* is uncertain. One might also note the use of 'we' in this particular passage: at several critical places where the narrator interjects himself into the discussions, as well as in the two different prefaces to the work, the pronoun used varies between 'I' and 'we'; it is not clear how much should be made of this, although it would seem compatible with the theory that a group of editors, perhaps those working on the *Tafsīr*, saw fit to revise Bal'amī's work and were thus primarily responsible for introducing many of the deviations from the original Arabic text.

16. Ṭabarī, I, vol.1, p.966.

17. *Tārīkh-i Bal'amī*, ed. Bahār, vol.2, p.1053. The words of the Prophet, incidentally, are given in Arabic, not Persian: *wulidtu fī zamāni'l-maliki'l-'ādil*.

18. Cf. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.14, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1089; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.136, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1318; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.231, with Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1577, 1581; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.273, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1663 (a bit of doggerel attributed to Muḥammad himself); *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.381, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, 1918; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.383, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1919; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.401, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1922 (some slight variants). In some cases, e.g., *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.241, and Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1595, there are more extensive variations in the verses. There are also Arabic verses not to be found in Ṭabarī, e.g., *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, 204;

vol.1, pp.337–339 (a large number of verses relating to the dispute between the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār after the death of the Prophet).

19. Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1918; cf. ed. Ibrāhīm, II, vol.1, p.273 n.4.

20. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.381.

21. *Tārīkh-i Balʿamī*, ed. Bahār, pp.1034–1036; the manuscripts followed by Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, p.216 indicate that Ṭabarī quoted only a few of these verses.

22. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp. 956–957. Bahār gives some variants from Ṭabarī in his notes, but the verses were taken from the Balʿamī manuscripts.

23. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.422.

24. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1103–1104.

25. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.10–11.

26. Sometimes Balʿamī refers specifically to *Kitāb-i maghāzī* (presumably the book by al-Wāqidī) and at other times, as later in this passage, to *akhbār-i maghāzī*. It is not clear whether or not these are meant to be references to the same book.

27. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.53.

28. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1180–1181.

29. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.56.

30. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.236. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1583–1584, merely indicates that the food served by Zaynab had been poisoned.

31. This criticism is unjustified in many respects. It may be noted that Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1202–1203, as well as Balʿamī, *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.68, give prominence to the story of Muḥammad's conversion of the jinn, and that Balʿamī does not include the story of the *miʿrāj* found in Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1157–1159.

32. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1234–1250; *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.71–83. There are also some differences within the Balʿamī manuscripts; cf. Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, pp.437–452. Among the variants are a lengthy discussion of the merits of ʿĀ'isha and a tradition, 'not recorded by Ṭabarī,' that Gabriel appeared to Muḥammad in the form of Diḥya al-Kalbī, most handsome of the Arabs.

33. An accurate rendition of Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1259–1260.

34. Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, p.449. This passage is relegated to the list of variants in the Rawshan edition, vol.2, pp.1339–1340.

35. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1586–1588.

36. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, p.239.

37. Balʿamī's father was respected and accepted as a *muḥaddith* in Shāfiʿī circles; see Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'* (Beirut, 1981–82), vol.15, p.292; cf. al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi'l-wafayāt*, ed. S. Dedering et al.

(Wiesbaden, in progress), vol.5, p.111. Niẓām al-Mulk, who insisted that viziers should 'belong to a pure sect – either Ḥanafī and Shafi'ī' (*Siyar al-mulūk yā Siyāsatnāma*, tr. H. Darke as *The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings* [London, 1960], p.178 [Persian text, chapter 41.32]) included Abū 'Alī Bal'amī as an '[orthodox] Muslim' (tr. Darke, pp.228–229 [Persian text, chapter 46.23]).

38. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.40–42.

39. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1159–1169.

40. On Ṭabarī's scholarly and religious reputation, see the useful survey by Rosenthal, *General Introduction*, pp.44–78. It would seem that it was not just the Ḥanbalīs who were suspicious of Ṭabarī's views.

41. In point of fact, the extant text of Ṭabarī says no such thing. Zayd is not at all prominent in Ṭabarī's account, which fairly clearly tries to build the most convincing case for 'Alī. If the current version of Ṭabarī's text is authentic, it may be that Bal'amī altered this because he did not want to lend credibility to 'Alī's case by even mentioning his name.

42. Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, pp.400–401; cf. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.36–40.

43. Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1578 does say that Marḥab was killed in single combat by Muḥammad b. Maslama, but makes no mention of Zubayr and gives conflicting evidence as to whether 'Alī was present at this battle or not.

44. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1250 ff.

45. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.85–86.

46. This is one of the few instances when Bal'amī inserts material of use in reconstructing his own life. On at least one other occasion, he indicates that he had travelled to Palestine and Egypt. The date and reasons for such a trip (or trips) – a pilgrimage perhaps? – are not known.

47. *Tārīkh-nāma*, ed. Rawshan, vol.1, pp.86–88. Several additional arguments and Qur'anic verses adduced to support Bal'amī's interpretation are omitted here.

48. W.M. Watt, tr., *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VI, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Albany, NY, 1988), p.157, n.240.

49. *Tārīkh-i Bal'amī*, ed. Bahār, vol.1, pp.2–18. The translation in Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, pp.2–8 is defective in this case and should be disregarded. For the most part, Zotenberg followed a manuscript tradition typical of the Arabic preface recension, which normally omits this section. Apparently, this part of his translation was added from a poor specimen of the Persian preface recension.

50. Qur'an 36:13.

51. Unfortunately, this important passage falls exactly at the break between the Bahār and Rawshan editions and was thus somehow omitted from both. It can be reconstructed from Zotenberg, *Chronique*, vol.1, pp.354–355, although there may be significant variants in the manuscripts. Cf. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1067–1069.

52. Ṭabarī, vol.1, p.1069.

53. Ṭabarī, vol.1, pp.1070–1071. These numbers are somewhat ambiguous; if they imply the end of the world would be around 514 AH (114 + 400), then Ṭabarī would have been writing this passage around 299 (514 – 215). The extant version of his text goes down to 302.

10

‘Say It Again and Make Me Your Slave’: Notes on al-Daylamī’s Seventh Sign of Man’s Love for God

Joseph Norment Bell

The exploitation of the evocative power of the names of persons and places, real or imagined, is certainly no monopoly of Arabic and Islamic literatures, nor is it by any means a monopoly of belletristic literature itself. The names Jackson and Bull Run, for example, still stir immediate and powerful feelings among many southern Americans and can be effective rhetorical tools in the hands of a skilled speaker or writer, whatever his genre. The sight of the name of a friend, colleague, or teacher on the cover of a collection of essays compiled in that person’s honour, a relevant example here, is not without an analogous impact. The many place-names and the not forgotten ladies enumerated by Imru’l-Qays in his *Muʿallaqa* reflect the adeptness of Arab poets in exploiting this technique in their work in the 6th century CE, shortly before the time of the Prophet Muḥammad.

The inimitable beauty of the Qur’an itself, although to a considerable degree enhanced by the captivating effect of other more or less poetic procedures, such as rhythmic, quasi-rhythmic,

rhymed and near-rhymed prose, cannot be said to rely to a great extent on the use of evocative names. The stories of past prophets and nations named in the sacred text undoubtedly play a certain rhetorical role, but in general they have a recognizably more didactic place in the Prophet's message. The sparse mention of names in some of the shorter, more poetic *sura*s grouped in the latter part of the Qur'an, however – among them Thamūd (51:43; 69:4–5; 85:18; 89:9; 91:11), ʿĀd (51:41; 69:4,6; 89:6), Noah (51:46;), the wives of Lot and Noah (66:10), Abraham (51:24,31[1]; 53:37; 60:4[2]; 87:19), Moses (51:38; 53:36; 61:5; 79:15; 87:19),[3] Pharaoh (51:38; 66:11; 69:9; 73:15–16; 79:17; 85:18; 89:10), Pharaoh's wife (66:11), Dhu'l-Nūn (Jonah) (68:48), the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus and chaste daughter of ʿImrān (66:12), Jesus (61:14),[4] Abū Lahab (111:1), the puzzling name Iram (89:7),[5] Mount Sinai (95:2), the holy valley of Ṭuwā (79:16), and the fountain Salsabīl in Paradise(76:18) – even though the didactic element is not absent, represent in part examples of use of the evocative technique. The same can be said, of course, of many names cited earlier in the Qur'an, as when, for instance, the prophet Shuʿayb in his appeal to the people of Madyan mentions the fate of the peoples of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Lot (11:89).

The distinction between the evocative and didactic use of names in the Qur'an, however, is rarely completely evident, and seldom is a name mentioned without some comment or added detail. Perhaps the primary contribution of the Qur'an to furthering the use of the evocative-name technique and encouraging its development lay not in its example but in the commands of the didactic and polemic *suras*: 'And remember/mention/remind thyself of (*wa-dhkur*) thy Lord often' (3:41), 'O you who believe, remember/mention/remind yourselves of (*udhkurū*) God often' (33:41), and numerous similar injunctions to remain mindful of God and His blessings. Together with a saying attributed by many to the Prophet, 'He who loves a thing remembers/mentions it often,'[6] these commands were to constitute the justification for carrying a technique of pagan and subsequently secular Arabic literature over into the spheres of Arabic and Islamic religious literature and mystical liturgy. Part of what happened when this had been

achieved is eloquently summarized by Louis Gardet at the beginning of his article 'Dhikr' in the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam:* "Remind thyself of (*udhkur*) thy Lord when thou forgettest" (Qur'an, XVIII, 24). Thus: the act of reminding, then oral mention of the memory, especially the tireless repetition of an ejaculatory litany, finally the very technique of this mention.'

Being mindful of someone or something has two distinct aspects: recalling on one's own and being reminded by someone or something else. Probably more attention has been focussed on the first aspect. In this paper we will attempt to concentrate more on the second, specifically on being reminded by another person or by an angel.

Writing around the end of the 4th/10th century, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Daylamī, a student of the Sunni mystic Ibn Khafīf (d.371/982), addresses the question we have raised in an interesting way. In his treatise on mystical love entitled *Kitāb ʿaṭf al-alif al-maʾlūf ʿalā'l-lām al-maʿṭūf,* at the beginning of chapter fifteen, 'On the Explanation of the Signs of Man's Love for God,' al-Daylamī introduces these signs as follows:

> The first of these is that you give preference to Him over all the other things you love. The second is that you obey Him both in your outward behavior and in your inward dispositions. The third is that you be in conformity with Him in all your affairs. The fourth is that you love His loved ones (*awliyāʾ*) with all your heart for His sake. The fifth is that you choose meeting Him over your own survival. The sixth is that you despise all else in comparison with your love [for Him]. *The seventh is that you rejoice in the remembrance of His blessings and favours to you.* The eighth is that you wholly abandon yourself to remembering Him in all your moments. The ninth is that you find delight in His signs in the world around you.[7] The tenth is that you annihilate every lot that comes to you other than from Him. The author of this book said: After this stage a man enters the state of annihilation and drunkenness. Thus if he surpasses this stage [that is, when he leaves behind both love and eros (*ʿishq*)], a word other than love must be used to describe his condition.[8]

This ladder of signs proceeds from the lover's preferring his Beloved to all else, through various stages of conformity, exclusiv-

ity and absorption, to the annihilation of all that does not proceed from the Beloved. Beyond this stage, words denoting love are no longer adequate to describe the subject's condition. Al-Daylamī explains in more detail the seventh sign of man's love for God, with which we are primarily concerned here, in these words:

> As to the seventh sign, that a man rejoice in the remembrance of His blessings and favours to him, this happens because the lover consoles himself with remembrance when his desire is intense but no way to reach his goal can be found. But those who have reached the goal view this sign differently, saying that when the lover's heart is confined to the vision of its Beloved, it is joined with Him in union and is distracted from experiencing any pleasure in Him, because in Him it has passed away from pleasure. *But when the heart hears another person mention Him, this distracts it from union with Him and brings about division from (and consequently awareness of) the Beloved,*[9] *then it experiences pleasure and enjoyment again, because these occur in the state of division.*[10]

Here two levels of lovers are clearly distinguished. The ordinary lover of God, when separated from his Beloved, finds his only pleasure in remembering His favours to him. But the lover in union, who is confined to the vision of his Beloved, can experience no pleasure whatsoever as long as he remains in union. Some extraordinarily powerful stimulus is necessary to divert him from his state of union and bring him back to 'division' so that he can again experience pleasure in the remembrance of the blessings and favours he has received from his Beloved.

It would seem that for the seventh sign al-Daylamī has given us only examples of the lover in union, for the two cases he cites are those of the prophets known as the 'Friends of God,' first a report about Muḥammad and then another about Abraham. The author of the *'Aṭf* cites these two reports in a very special, deeply spiritual context. Did other authors see in them what al-Daylamī did? And if so, to what extent, and with what nuances?

Abraham

We will consider the report about Abraham first. It seems to

provide a nearer match to al-Daylamī's description of the seventh sign because the Beloved is mentioned explicitly by name. This is how al-Daylamī recounts the tale.

> It is also related that Abraham, the friend of God, was sitting once on top of a mountain watching his sheep graze. Below him were four hundred flocks of sheep, each with a shepherd and a dog with a golden collar. The angels, said the narrator, protested, asking, 'Why, O Lord, hast thou taken Abraham as thy friend, when he possesses all these worldly goods?' But God said to Gabriel, the report continues, 'Go to him, stand, and mention me.' So Gabriel went to him in the form of a man, stood behind him, and said, 'O Most Holy One (*Yā Quddūsu*)!' Abraham turned around and exclaimed to him, 'Say it again, my friend, and I will give you a flock of sheep – dog, sheep, shepherd, and all.' So Gabriel said it again, [and Abraham continued to reply], 'Say it again, and you shall have another,' until Gabriel had said it four hundred times and Abraham had given him all his flocks. Then Abraham said, 'Say it again, and make me your slave and sell me.' Whereupon, the report concludes, Gabriel said to him, 'It is indeed fitting [that you] should have been chosen as a friend.'[11]

The origins of this particularly beautiful version of the report are not known to me, nor after some searching have I been able to find it in the sources I have used.[12] While it may occur elsewhere, it is sufficient for our purposes to compare the account given by al-Daylamī with two other versions to be presented here.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Ṣaffūrī, writing in Mecca about 884/1479, relates a version of this story in his *Nuzhat al-majālis wa-muntakhab al-nafā'is* in the chapter entitled 'On Generosity, Chivalry (*futūwa*) and Returning Greetings.'[13] He thus situates the account squarely within the ethical context of the generosity, selflessness and devotion for which Abraham was known.[14] The mystical dimension is virtually absent.

> Anecdote (*ḥikāya*): When God chose Abraham as his bosom friend (*khalīl*), the angels protested, 'He has a wife and children (*zawj wa-walad*),' to which God Most High replied, 'In his heart is to be found nothing other than Me. Go and put him to the test.' So Gabriel and Michael, upon both of whom be peace, went to him

as he was watching over his sheep. Now Abraham had four thousand dogs, each of which had a golden collar around its neck. The two angels asked him about this fact, and he replied, 'It is because this world is carrion and those who seek after it are dogs.' Then he offered them food and they said to him, 'We cannot accept it without [paying] its price.' To this he answered, 'Its price is 'In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate' at the beginning and 'Praise be to God' at the end.' Whereupon the angels said, 'You indeed deserve to be a bosom friend.' Then they uttered in a beautiful voice, 'Glory be to God the Pre-Eternal (*qadīm*), most eternal is He! And to the Munificent, most munificent is He! And to the Merciful, most merciful is He! Most Glorious, Most Holy, Lord of the Angels and the Spirit.'[15] Abraham, enraptured, cried, 'Say it again!' But they answered, 'We will only say it in exchange for something.' 'I give you all the sheep I own,' he replied. So they recited the words with a voice more beautiful than before, and Abraham said, 'Say it a third time.' But again they answered, 'We will only say it in exchange for something.' 'I give you all the possessions and children in my household,' he replied. So they recited the words again with a voice yet more beautiful than before, and Abraham said, 'Say it a fourth time.' Once again they answered, 'We will only say it in exchange for something.' 'I give you myself to serve as a shepherd,' he replied. 'God keep for you, your possessions and your children, I am Gabriel and this is Michael,' was their answer. 'And I am the Friend of God,' Abraham rejoined, 'I do not take back what I have given away.' So God commanded him to sell all he had given away and with its price to buy land (*ḍiyāʿ*) and to establish it as a sacred endowment (*waqf*). This was related by al-Nasafī in *Zahrat al-riyāḍ*.[16]

As in al-Daylamī's version and in al-Ṣaffūrī's second anecdote about Abraham below, the commonplace of the protesting angels is essential to the story, but the angels criticize the patriarch for his children as well as his possessions. Michael accompanies Gabriel, but he seems to have no real role in this version. The shepherds are gone, but the number of dogs is now four thousand rather than four hundred. The absence of the shepherds and the greater number of dogs serve to highlight Abraham's comparison of those who seek the goods of this world with dogs in search of carrion. Abraham asks the angels to utter a formula

containing divine names only four times, not four hundred. Thus, little of the symmetry between the patriarch's four hundred flocks and his four hundred requests found in al-Daylamī's text is to be seen in al-Ṣaffūrī's version. It is echoed only by the proportion between four thousand dogs and four requests, something which entails a new division of Abraham's offer to the angels. In the al-Daylamī story Abraham gave his four hundred flocks away one at a time, after which he offered himself. There is no mention of children. According to al-Ṣaffūrī's narrative he is at first rewarded for his normal generosity, the meal he has offered, since the angels insist on paying its price, which is at Abraham's request their pronouncing the divine names. Subsequently, however, they will have something in exchange for repeating the formula they recite, and Abraham disposes first of his sheep, then of his household possessions and his children, and finally of himself, offering to become the angels' shepherd. The sequence *possessions, children, self* will be important in al-Ghazālī's version, which we will consider next. There, however, Abraham will speak of his 'body' rather than of his 'self.'

Recorded by al-Ṣaffūrī, but lacking in both other versions is the angels' returning Abraham's possessions and children to him and his refusal to except them. In the primarily ethical context that is al-Ṣaffūrī's concern, this element of the story is of huge significance, but it is unimportant to the mystical setting of the other two versions. A saying attributed to the Prophet, another ascribed to John the Baptist, and a second anecdote about Abraham's generosity, translated below, confirm the author's predominantly ethical purpose in narrating the story.

> The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: 'God has never endowed any friend [of His] (*walī*, saint) with other than a generous nature.'[17] Likewise Yaḥyā (John the Baptist) b. Zakariyyā', upon both of whom be blessings and peace, said to Iblīs, 'Tell me which people you find dearest and which most loathsome.' Iblīs replied, 'Dearest to me is the miserly believer, and most loathsome is the generous debauchee, for I fear God may observe his generosity and accept him.'
>
> Anecdote: A Zoroastrian (*majūsī*) visited Abraham, upon whom

be peace, and Abraham brought him food to eat and then said to him, 'Would you like to accept Islam?' At this the man abandoned the food and went off. But God spoke to Abraham, saying, 'O Abraham, I have been providing his sustenance for forty years despite his unbelief, and you wish to turn him from his religion with a single meal?' So Abraham went off in search of the man, and when he found him, he told him what had happened. [On hearing it], the man accepted Islam and returned with Abraham to complete his meal. One day a fire-worshipper came [to Abraham], and he treated him with his usual generosity. The angels protested, 'Our Lord, your bosom friend is being generous to your enemy!' But God said, 'I know my friend better than you do. Gabriel, go down to him and tell him what the angels have said. So Gabriel informed him, and Abraham replied, 'Tell my Lord: "I have learned generosity (*jūd*) from Thee, for Thou art good to those who do evil."'[18]

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.1058/1111) relates the third version of this tale in his *Sirr al-ʿālamayn wa-kashf mā fi'l-dārayn* immediately following a mystical passage on Abraham's perception of the divine light at the origin of the First Cause in the chain of emanation. When he had seen this light he could no longer be concerned with possessions and children and exclaimed: 'Behold my body belongs to fires (*nīrān*), my children to sacrifice (*qurbān*) and my possessions to inundation (*fayaḍān* = emanation).'[19] Despite the fact that al-Ghazālī cites the story in this mystical context, he does not overlook that it belongs to the moral topic of generosity as well, for he concludes with the words, 'We shall relate anecdotes dealing with generosity (*ḥikāyāt al-karam*) in the appropriate places in the *Kitāb al-Salsabīl* and the books of *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*.[20] In al-Ghazālī's version of the story Michael again accompanies Gabriel, and the number not only of dogs but also of shepherds is multiplied tenfold.

The angels said to each other: 'Our Lord has chosen a bosom friend (*khalīl*) from a vile drop of seed (*nutfa*) and given him great wealth (*milk*).' So God proposed to them: 'Entrust [the matter] to the most restrained among you and your chief (*ilā azhadikum wara'īsikum*).'[21] They agreed on Gabriel and Michael, who went down to Abraham on the day when his sheep were to be gathered at a

> hill for milking. Now Abraham had four thousand shepherds, four thousand dogs with collars of red gold on their necks, and forty thousand milk-giving ewes, in addition to a vast number of horses and camels. The two angels stood on the way along which the sheep were being gathered in, and one of them cried, 'True delight is [hearing] the sounds Most Glorious (*subbūḥ*), Most Holy (*quddūs*)!' To this the other replied, 'Lord of the Angels and the Spirit!' [Hearing it], Abraham said to them, 'Say that again, and you shall have half my possessions.' [When they had complied], he said, 'Say that again, and you shall have my possessions and my children (*waladī, wuldī*) and my body,' whereupon the angels of the heavens cried out, 'This indeed is generosity (*karam*)!' Then they heard one (a voice) calling from the Throne: 'The Bosom Friend is in agreement with His bosom friend, so pay no heed, O ye angels, to the presence or absence of wealth …'[22]

In this version, unlike the other two, Abraham does not wait until his possessions are exhausted to offer himself. Indeed his second offer to the angels, namely his (remaining) possessions, his children and his body are precisely the things he is said to have named, in reverse order, after having perceived the divine light, something which leads us to conjecture some reworking of the text – at some point – to fit the context.

Muḥammad

The first of the two examples of the seventh sign of man's love for God cited by al-Daylamī, as remarked earlier, is ostensibly less apt than the second. One is at the outset tempted to think that the author was stretching the example of Muḥammad to include both of the 'Friends of God' here. The seventh sign at its highest level, it will be recalled, is that the heart of the mystic who has 'reached the goal' experiences pleasure when it hears the Beloved mentioned by another because this distracts it from its normal state of union with the Beloved, in which, having passed away from pleasure, it experiences no pleasure in Him. In the first example the Prophet asks one of his Companions – in almost all versions ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd, but here surprisingly Ubayy b. Kaʿb – to recite

from the Qur'an to him, and after he hears a number of verses, he breaks into tears.

> As an example of this sign we have the report in which the Prophet said to Ubayy b. Kaʿb, 'Recite to me from the Qur'an.' 'How should I recite it to you, when it was revealed to you?' he replied. 'I wish to hear it from someone else,' the Prophet answered. 'So I recited to him the *Sūra* of the Women,' he said, 'and when I reached God's words, 'How then shall it be, when we bring forward from every nation a witness, and bring thee to witness against those?' (4:41), I looked at the Messenger of God and saw that his eyes were filled with tears.'[23]

It is the ascription to Ubayy b. Kaʿb rather than to Ibn Masʿūd that first strikes the reader in al-Daylamī's presentation of this *ḥadīth*. The report is well attested in numerous sources, including al-Bukhārī (d.256/870) and Muslim (d.261/875), with various *isnāds* going back to Ibn Masʿūd,[24] and the alternative account quoted below, while it does not name the reciter, names Ibn Masʿūd as being in the group of Companions present, but not Ubayy b. Kaʿb. Although the question of attribution is not particularly relevant to our purpose here, it should be mentioned that Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy b. Kaʿb were both considered authorities on divergent readings of the Qur'anic text and both are often cited together for their differing or shared readings.[25] Until we find evidence to the contrary, a lapse of memory or a slip of the pen would seem to have been the reason for al-Daylamī's ascribing the report to Ubayy.[26]

In general, there is little difference from source to source in the wording of this *ḥadīth,* especially in the first quote from the Prophet, although there are some variations, particularly towards the end. We cannot concern ourselves here with all these discrepancies or with the places they are recorded – most are discussed in some detail by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d.852/1499) in the *Fatḥ al-Bārī*. Some of them, however, are relevant to our present discussion. In the section in which Ibn Ḥajar provides his most extended commentary on the *ḥadīth,* al-Bukhārī has given the version we know from al-Daylamī, with minor variations, and, of course, as being from Ibn Masʿūd. Ibn Ḥajar after discussing

various details regarding the *ḥadīth,* then relates on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d.327/938)[27] and al-Ṭabarānī (d.360/971) a substantially different account of the event in which it is specified that it took place while the Prophet was visiting the tribe Banū Ẓafar and in which the Prophet's weeping is explained, in his own words, in a way quite different from what al-Daylamī must have understood, or at least from what he intended to convey in the *Kitāb ʿatf al-alif.*[28] I present here a slightly more complete version of the report given by al-Qurṭubī (d.671/1272), who was relying on the Ḥanafī jurist Abu'l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d.373/983).[29]

> Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad <ʿIbn Manīʿ <ʿAbū Kāmil <Fuḍayl <Yūnus b. Muḥammad b. Fuḍāla <his father: that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and give him peace, came to them among the Banū Ẓafar and sat upon the rock there. With him were Ibn Masʿūd, Muʿādh and other Companions. He ordered a reciter to recite, and when the reciter reached this verse 'How then shall it be, when we bring forward from every nation a witness, and bring thee to witness against those?,' the Messenger of God wept until his cheeks were wet, and said: 'My Lord, this is for those in whose midst I am now, how will it be then for those whom I have not seen?' [30]

Following this text al-Qurṭubī relates a version close to that given by al-Daylamī, noting that it is given by Muslim with some differences in wording. He then proceeds to expand on the interpretation that the Prophet himself gave of the Qurʾanic passage. It is the view of '*our* '*ulamāʾ,*' he explains, that the Prophet wept because of the gravity of the meaning of the *sura,* because prophets can be called as witnesses against their peoples and because he himself would be called as a witness on the Day of Resurrection. By the words 'against those' was meant 'unbelievers among the Quraysh and other unbelievers,' but the Quraysh were intended in particular. Their punishment would be especially severe since they had remained stubborn when confronted with the miracles and wonders that accompanied the Prophetic mission. Also to be understood from the *ḥadīth* is that it is permissible for a learner to recite the Qurʾan before his teacher and to interpret it, and the reverse.[31]

Al-Nawawī (d.676/1277), commenting on the wording in

Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ,* states, 'In Ibn Masʿūd's *ḥadīth* three beneficial things are endorsed: listening and hearkening to the recitation (of the Qurʾan), weeping when one is doing this, and requesting another to recite it in order to listen to it, since this is a more effective method of pondering it (*tafahhum*) and reflecting upon it (*tadabbur*). Thus also, [implicitly], it exhorts men of learning and merit to be humble, even with their students.'[32]

Ibn Baṭṭāl (d.449/1057),[33] commenting on the *ḥadīth*, surmised that the Prophet may have wished to hear the Qurʾan from another in order to establish its public recitation (*ʿarḍ*) as received practice (*sunna*), and, paralleling al-Nawawī, remarks that listening to another, as the Prophet did with Ibn Masʿūd, is the most effective way to ponder and reflect upon the Qurʾan. The situation was otherwise, Ibn Baṭṭāl adds, when the Prophet himself recited the Qurʾan to Ubayy b. Kaʿb, for his intention in that case was 'to teach him how to perform the recitation, the points of articulation, and the like.' [34]

To understand al-Daylamī's use of the Abraham story, we compared the context within which he presented it with the context in which two other authors found it appropriate. To do something similar with the *ḥadīth* from Ibn Masʿūd – or Ubayy b. Kaʿb as al-Daylamī has it – is a little more complicated, since the compilers of the *ḥadīth* themselves already present it, or its parts or variants under a number of rubrics, not all especially relevant to us here. Thus, al-Nasāʾī (d.305/915) presents versions containing the words 'I wish to hear it from someone else,' under the rubrics 'Who loves to Hear the Qurʾan from Another,' 'When the One Requesting the Recitation (*muqriʾ*) Says to the Reciter: Enough (*ḥasbanā*),' and 'When the One Requesting the Recitation (*muqriʾ*) Says to the Reciter: Stop (*amsik*).' A short version without the words, 'I wish to hear it from someone else,' comes under the rubric 'Weeping at the Recitation of the Qurʾan.'[35] The Qurʾanic exegetes, when they mention the *ḥadīth,* tend to give it in connection with Qurʾan 4:41, which is cited in it,[36] and the *ḥadīth* specialists at times classify it under 4:41 as well.[37] Al-Ājurrī (d.360/970) relates the report in the context of the

etiquette governing the relationship between the accomplished Qur'an reciter and his pupils.[38]

In the sphere of dogma, the tradition is used, in a longer version, by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d.751/1350) to corroborate his insistence on submission to the authority of the Companions of the Prophet. After Ibn Mas'ūd's recitation the Prophet is reported to have uttered various expressions of praise and benediction and then to have said, 'I accept God as Lord and Islam as my religion, and I accept you (the Muslim *umma*) as long as Ibn Umm 'Abd (Ibn Mas'ūd) accepts you.' From this Ibn al-Qayyim concludes that no Muslims in subsequent generations are entitled to oppose the opinions of Ibn Mas'ūd or, correspondingly, those of other Companions.[39] Ibn al-Qayyim's teacher Ibn Taymiyya (d.728/1328), and earlier Ibn Ḥazm (d.456/1064), had each previously cited the report in connection with the question of the Qur'an as God's eternal attribute of speech. Ibn Taymiyya uses it in summing up his argument that the Qur'an is God's speech, heard from him by Gabriel and from Gabriel by Muḥammad,[40] while Ibn Ḥazm, in a similar context, pointing out the special position of Moses who, like the angels, heard God's speech directly, also affirms, true to his literalist (Ẓāhirī) principles, that what we utter when reading the Qur'an and what is preserved in our hearts or recorded in our written copies of the Qur'an must be called God's speech (since God has called it this).[41]

Al-Yāfi'ī (d.768/1367), dealing with the life and personality of Muḥammad, cites the report as his only example in a section on weeping as one of the Prophet's traits.[42] In al-Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn,* on the other hand, the *ḥadīth* is classified in a section extending over about two pages entitled 'On the Virtue of Weeping on Account of Fear of God and Longing for Him.' This is a development from al-Bukhārī's and al-Nasā'ī's sections on 'Weeping at the Recitation of the Qur'an' in the direction of what al-Daylamī perceived in the report. The section begins with two Qur'anic passages that commend weeping: 'They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility' (17:109), and 'Do ye then wonder at this recital? And will ye laugh and not weep' (53:59–60).[43] Then follows the *ḥadīth* from Ibn

Mas'ūd and other reports of occasions when the Prophet and certain of his Companions wept.[44]

Not surprisingly close to al-Daylamī in their use of the *ḥadīth*, among the sources I have consulted, are the mystics Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d.386/996) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. A short version containing the words 'I wish to hear it from someone else' is cited in virtually the same context by both authors – by al-Makkī when discussing public as opposed to silent reading of the Qur'an and by al-Ghazālī when writing on the exoteric aspects of Qur'anic recitation.[45] It occurs towards the middle of a nearly identical series of reports related by both writers extolling reading the Qur'an aloud in a pleasing manner. The upshot of all the reports is to balance the customary presumption in such matters put forth by al-Makkī at the beginning of his discussion when he cites the saying ascribed to the Prophet, 'Recitation in secret is more meritorious than recitation in public in the same proportion as alms given in secret are more meritorious than alms given in public,' which is to say seventy times more meritorious.[46]

Al-Ghazālī, when treating the esoteric aspects of Qur'anic recitation, again cites a version of the *ḥadīth,* this time without the words 'I wish to hear it from someone else,' although these are supplied by al-Zabīdī (d.1295/1791) in his expansion of the text in his *Itḥāf.*[47] The character of al-Ghazālī's discussion is highly mystical, as is the rubric under which the tradition is mentioned, namely, *ta'aththur* (being moved, affected), which the author defines as 'the mystic's heart being affected by influences that vary with the Qur'anic verses, so that for every understanding he receives a state (*ḥāl*) and an emotion (*wajd*) with which his heart may be described, such as sorrow, fear, hope, and the like.' But al-Ghazālī adds something particularly important for our purposes here: 'Whenever the gnostic fully understands [the meaning of what he is reciting],[48] dread (*khishya*) will be the state that dominates the others in his heart. For the arousal of anxiety (*taḍyīq*) predominates in the verses of the Qur'an, and the mention of pardon and mercy is not to be found except accompanied by conditions the gnostic is unable to meet.'[49] This tone dominates al-Ghazālī's use of the *ḥadīth* with which we are concerned. It is

cited in the context of the quivering of the flesh of the reciter when the verses he intones mention the fire of Hell because of his fear of it. The Prophet wept at the mention of his becoming a witness against his community (more specifically the Quraysh) because the image of that awesome state had entirely engaged his heart.[50]

Conclusion

None of the authors we have consulted other than al-Daylamī, it would seem, was entirely willing or possibly fully able to exploit the Abraham story or the *ḥadīth* that relates the Prophet's weeping on hearing Ibn Masʿūd recite the Qurʾan in the same simple and aesthetically pleasing manner as the author of the *Kitāb ʿaṭf al-alif*. Closest is perhaps al-Yāfiʿī in his treatment of the report of Muḥammad's weeping on hearing Ibn Masʿūd's recitation. Al-Daylamī presents these narratives in a context where the focus is clearly on God's *jamāl,* His beauty and His goodness, as opposed to His *jalāl,* His might and His wrath, or to any considerations of day-to-day human morality. The differing versions of the Abraham story and the differing contexts in which both the Abraham story and the *ḥadīth* on the Prophet's weeping on hearing the Qurʾan recited by another explain a great deal, but taken together they also say something about ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Daylamī, both as author and as mystic. The literary-aesthetic sensibility he reveals and the apparent religious devotion he exhibits are unmatched by the other authors, however celebrated the names of some may be in the history of Islamic literature.

This is by no means to assert that al-Daylamī's sensibility is somehow unsurpassed in that literary tradition. As is well known, both the profane and religious literatures abound with astonishing examples of lovers being reminded by someone else or something else of their beloved, and the tradition was already well established by al-Daylamī's time. Not only the uttering of a name, but the call of a bird, a flash of lightning or some other natural phenomenon might be the reminder. Hearing or otherwise being reminded of the name of the beloved could have various consequences, ranging

from delight and longing to be reminded again to swoons or to death. Some characters, such as the erotic poet Majnūn Laylā, were gradually moved by tradition from the profane to the religious sphere. Indeed Majnūn's famous refusal to answer to any name other than that of his beloved Laylā, implying a kind of identity with his beloved, became an example for mystics attempting to explain their views and experiences concerning the question of union with God. The state of the lover who only responds to the name of his beloved, as was the case with Majnūn Laylā, however, belongs to al-Daylamī's next sign, that is, the eighth sign of man's love for God.[51] Finding delight in the beloved's signs in the world around one constitutes al-Daylamī's ninth sign of man's love for God. Examples are the early mystic Abū Ḥamza al-Nīsābūrī (d.ca. 902 AD) and the later mystic of Shīrāz, Rūzbihān Baqlī (d.606/1209). Rūzbihān, interestingly, in some of his writings is strongly influenced by al-Daylamī.[52] The phenomena to be observed in the behaviour of all these personalities are clearly related to the spirituality identified and described in al-Daylamī's seventh sign. But however intimately connected to it, these matters remain outside the scope of the present study.

Notes

1. The passage that mentions Abraham (51:21–37) is long and unquestionably primarily didactic, but it introduces other names that are followed by only brief commentary: Moses, Pharaoh, ʿĀd, Thamūd, and Noah (51:38–46).

2. Perhaps the verse is too didactic for our purposes, since it cites at some length the example of how Abraham dealt with unbelievers.

3. The recapitulation of the stories of the people of Noah, ʿĀd, Thamūd, and the peoples of Lot and Pharaoh in Qurʾan 54:9–42, taken together, the mention of al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt (53:19–20 to 25), the passage on prophethood that mentions Noah, Abraham and Jesus by name in 57:25–27, the tale of Noah in the *sura* with his name (71), and the story of Moses and Pharaoh in 79:15–26, are too obviously didactic to be considered examples of chiefly rhetorical or evocative use of names.

4. The famous verse 6 of the same *sura*, in which Jesus predicts the

coming of an apostle after him with the name Aḥmad, must be understood as more or less exclusively didactic.

5. See W. Montgomery Watt, 'Iram,' *EI2,* vol.3, pp.1270.

6. Cf., al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl,* ed. al-Shaykh Bakrī Ḥayyānī (Beirut, 1989), vol.1, no.1829.

7. The poet Majnūn Laylā may be taken as an example of the eighth sign and the mystics Abū Ḥamza and Rūzbihān Baqlī as examples of the ninth. See the conclusion.

8. Al-Daylamī, *Kitāb ʿaṭf al-alif al-maʾlūf ʿalāʾl-lām al-maʿṭūf* (hereafter *ʿAṭf*), MS, pp.196–197. Emphasis is mine. References are to the pages of the *unicum,* given on the margins both of the edition by Jean-Claude Vadet (Cairo, 1962) and of that forthcoming by Hassan Mahmoud Abdel Latif el-Shafei and myself. All translations (except Qurʾanic passages) are from a forthcoming English rendition of the work that Professor el-Shafei and I have prepared.

9. There is an apparent allusion here to the verses by al-Ḥallāj cited by al-Daylamī in *ʿAṭf,* MS, pp.141–142:

Ittaḥada'l-maʿshūqu li'l-ʿāshiqi.
Inqasama'l-mawmūqu li'l-wāmiqi.
Wa-shtaraka'l-shiklāni fī ḥālatin,
umtuḥiqā fi'l-ʿālami'l-māḥiqi.

The beloved was united for his lover.
The cherished one was divided for his admirer.
These two, like souls shared in a single state,
they were obliterated in the world that obliterates.

10. Al-Daylamī, *ʿAṭf,* MS, p.205. Emphasis is mine.

11. Ibid., MS, pp.206–207.

12. Without the impressive work of those responsible for the Internet sites at <http://www.alwaraq.com>, where at this writing nearly two hundred works in various disciplines, many of enormous length – albeit replete with errors – can be searched electronically, and <http://www.muhaddith.com>, where the Qurʾan and major works on *ḥadīth,* other religious sciences, and proverbs, as well as various dictionaries can likewise be searched, this article, both because of the weak library facilities at my own institution and of difficulties arising from personal travel, could not have been brought to completion in its present form. Sakhr's CD *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf,* version 2.0, was also useful, particularly because it includes some commentaries. Admittedly the scholarly editions represented are not identified in the first and third of these

electronic resources (they are at <muhaddith.com>), and text-critical apparatus is mostly lacking. However, this has not often been a problem. Finally, the invaluable printed work by Abū Hājar Muḥammad al-Saʿīd b. Basyūnī Zaghlūl, *Mawsūʿat aṭrāf al-ḥadīth al-nabawī al-sharīf* (Beirut, 1419/1989), often helped point in the right direction.

13. Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL,* vol.2, p.178; Supplement, vol.2, p.230. Al-Ṣaffūrī names as his source a work entitled *Zahrat al-riyāḍ* by al-Nasafī, a work he mentions a number of times, but which I have been unable to identify.

14. According to one anecdote related by al-Daylamī, Abraham never ate without a guest (*ʿAṭf,* MS, p.275).

15. The reference is to Qurʾan 70:4, 78:38, and 97:4, where the angels and the Spirit are mentioned together. 'The Spirit' is often considered to refer to Gabriel himself. See D.B. Macdonald, 'Malāʾika. 1. In the Ḳurʾān and in Sunnī Islam,' *EI2*, vol.6, p.217.

16. *Nuzhat al-majālis wa-muntakhab al-nafāʾis,* p.267, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

17. See al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl,* 6, no.16204; al-Minnāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr: Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr* <muhaddith.com>, version 2.6, 3, no.3644.

18. *Nuzhat al-majālis wa-muntakhab al-nafāʾis,* p.267.

19. *Sirr al-ʿālamayn wa-kashf mā fī l-dārayn,* p.21, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

20. Ibid., p.22.

21. Clearly a reference to the two principal archangels Gabriel and Michael, Gabriel presumably being considered the chief and Michael, who never laughed after the creation of Hell, the most (self-)controlled. See A.J. Wensinck, 'Mīkāl,' *EI2*, vol.7, p.25.

22. *Sirr al-ʿālamayn wa-kashf mā fiʾl-dārayn,* pp.21–22. Remainder of sentence unclear in the text at my disposal.

23. *ʿAṭf,* MS, pp.205–206.

24. See, for example, the commentary of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* on al-Bukhārī's *isnād* for *ḥadīth* no.4216 in *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf,* version 2.0, CD (Sakhr). The biographical and historical literature in general, when it mentions the *ḥadīth,* tends to associate it with Ibn Masʿūd, either placing it in a biographical notice on him or citing a version in which he names himself as the reciter. See, for example, Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba,* p.1597; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf,* p.2894; al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-janān wa-ʿibrat al-yaqẓān fī maʿrifat ḥawādith al-zamān,* p.19; Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Taʾrīkh Iṣbahān,* p.141; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*

fī asmāʾ al-rijāl, p.5619; and numerous other sources. (All the preceding citations are from <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.) Cf. also al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī in his *Itḥāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (n.p., Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol.4, p.498.

25. Only a few examples should suffice. Disagreeing, cf., e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* <muhaddith.com>, version 1.10, vol.1, section 'al-Qawl fi'l-lugha allatī nazala bi-ha'l-Qurʾan,' at text string ''iqraʾanīhā Ubayy ibn Kaʿb'; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī,* <muhaddith.com>, version 2.01, vol.9, 'Kitāb faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān, Bāb unzila'l-Qurʾān ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf,' at text string 'famāyasṭatīʿūna lakum'; ibid., vol.11, 'Kitāb al-istiʾdhān, Bāb qawl Allāh taʿālā: 'Yā ayyuha lladhīna āmanū, lā tadkhulū buyūtan ghayra buyūtikum ḥattā tastaʾnisū wa-tusallimū ʿalā ahlihā,' at text string 'wa min ṭarīq Mughīrat ibn Muqsim.' Agreeing, cf. ibid., vol.9, 'Kitāb faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān, Bāb unzila'l-Qurʾan ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf,' at text string 'qaraʾa ibn Masʿūd wa Ubayy ibn.' See R. Paret, 'Ḳirāʾa,' *EI*2, vol.5, p.127.

26. The fact that Ibn Baṭṭāl (see below), or the tradition he was following, concludes a commentary on the *ḥadīth* with a remark about the Prophet having recited the Qurʾan to Ubayy may have been a source of confusion (see below). We should probably discount the idea that the differing ascriptions of this tradition, although great prestige is obviously bestowed on the reciter, reflect a rivalry between the Anṣār (Ubayy) and the Muhājirīn (Ibn Masʿūd).

27. See Sezgin, *GAS,* vol.1, pp.178–179.

28. *Fatḥ al-bārī,* <muhaddith.com>, version 2.01, vol.9, 'Kitāb faḍāʾil al-Qurʾan, Bāb al-bukāʾ 'inda qirāʾat al-Qurʾan,' at text string 'Faḍāla ʿan abīhi.'

29. See Sezgin, *GAS,* vol.1, pp.445–450.

30. *Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾan,* 5, on Qurʾan 4:41.<muhaddith.com>, version 1.40, at text string 'Fuḍayl ʿan Yūnus ibn Muḥammad.' Qurʾan translation is mine. See also al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl,* 2, no.4345; al-Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid* (Beirut, 1408/1988), vol.7, pp.4–5, <muhaddith.com>, version 2.01, no.10522; and al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* <muhaddith.com>, version 1.01, 19:244, biography of Muḥammad b. Fuḍāla al-Anṣārī *thumma* al-Ẓafarī.

31. *Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾan,* 5, on Qurʾan 4:41.

32. *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* cmt. on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, ḥadith* 1332, *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf,* version 2.0, CD (Sakhr).

33. See Brockelmann, *GAL,* Supplement, vol.1, p.261.

34. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, ḥadīth* 2951, *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf,* version 2.0, CD (Sakhr), cited in the commentary.

35. Incomplete pages under the title *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān,* p.28, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 June 2001. These rubrics reflect in part those in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī in the *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān.*

36. See al-Suyūtī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fi'l-tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr,* on 4:41. Al-Ṭabarī (*Jāmiʿ al-bayān*) has it under the preceding verse, which asserts that God is never unjust. Al-Qurṭubī has it both under verse 41 and the following related verse.

37. Thus, for instance, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī* <muhaddith.com>, version 2.01, at text string 'baʿḍ al-ḥadīth 'an 'Amr,' and al-Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawā'id,* <muhaddith.com>, version 2.01, no.10522.

38. *Akhlāq ahl al-Qur'ān,* p.22, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

39. *I'lām al-muwaqqaʿīn ʿan Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn,* p.1111 (proof 35), <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

40. *Jāmiʿ al-rasā'il,* p.227, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

41. *Al-Fiṣal fi'l-milal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-niḥal,* p.340, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001. Cf. *EI2,* vol.3, pp.797a–b.

42. *Mir'āt al-janān,* p.19, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 Jun. 2001.

43. Translation Abdallah Yusuf Ali, capitalization altered.

44. *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn,* pp.119–20, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 June 2001; <muhaddith.com>, version 2.07, no.446.

45. Al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb,* pp.108–109, <http://www.alwaraq.com>, 20 June 2001; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* (Cairo, n.d.), vol.1, pp.270–271.

46. *Qūt al-qulūb,* pp.106–107.

47. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn,* vol.1, p.278; al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-sāda,* vol.4, p.518.

48. Addition from al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-sāda,* vol.4, p.517.

49. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn,* vol.1, p.286.

50. Ibid., vol.1, p.287.

51. Al-Daylamī, *ʿAṭf,* MS, p.207. On Majnūn Laylā's curious madness and its relation to his poetry, see Asʿad E. Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Majnūn Legend* (Beirut, 1980).

52. On Rūzbihān, see Carl W. Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (Richmond, Surrey, 1996).

11

Lists and Memory: Ibn Qutayba and Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb

Julia Bray

This paper considers some aspects of the techniques and uses of memory, and of the formation or attempted formation of cultural memory, at around the latter half of the 3rd/9th century.[1] Its main point of reference is Ibn Qutayba (d.276/889) and his *al-Maʿārif*, one of the founding works of didactic *adab*, a handbook of socially useful general knowledge and history written for an emerging new class of readers, the self-educated, part of whose cultural needs had, for various reasons, to be met by private reading rather than through taking part in study sessions.

The approach and formats of the opening pages of *al-Maʿārif* are compared with those of the *al-Muḥabbar* of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d.245/860), which covers many similar points, but seems to be the end product of a more conventional process of *viva voce* teaching. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb and his choice of historical materials are now regarded, at least in some quarters, as a curiosity, if not an aberration;[2] but in his own time, judging by the entry on him and references to him in the late 4th/10th-century *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm, he was seen as a sound, influential and mainstream scholar.[3] His *al-Muḥabbar* nevertheless has some features which

mark it out, like *al-Maʿārif* though in a rather different way, as exploiting the didactic possibilities of the written page.

The focus of the paper is lists. Lists are used heavily both by Ibn Qutayba and by Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb,[4] as of course by Muslim scholars generally; but for what purposes, and how should their various formats be interpreted? The paper compares lists as used in the opening passages of *al-Maʿārif* and *al-Muḥabbar*, both of which give an outline of universal history from the Creation, serving as a framework for the history of Islam. As Ilse Lichtenstädter concluded from her preliminary survey of *al-Muḥabbar*, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb here uses lists to eliminate narrative,[5] thereby reducing the proportion of uncertain or ambiguous knowledge. The non-narrative data that remain embody a specific technique of organization and historical analysis: the reduction of data and their exposition to elements that can be verified and which display recurrent patterns of interrelation. Ibn Qutayba's opening lists by contrast are designed to include, indeed to foreground, narrative with all its ambiguities. True to its title, his *al-Maʿārif* is indeed about knowledge; but it does not appear consistently to be the didactic summary and *aide-mémoire* that its preface describes. The fruit of some twenty years' reflection and revision,[6] the work as we have it in its final form still appears open-ended, and its real subject seems to be the open-endedness of knowledge itself.

I

As writers, we are familiar with lists as an expository tool: a means of organizing and presenting material. Equally, as readers, we are familiar with lists as menus: we choose items from a list and give them our own priorities. Generally we treat medieval Arabic lists as menus, regardless of their format.

However, there are many kinds of list, and most of them combine several characteristics. The present list, for example, is, among other things, both enumerative and contrastive, though we may not consciously have noted the fact, since the list is a pervasive form which we often accept as natural and do not trouble to

identify. Lists have their place in story-telling, for instance – most obviously in formulaic fiction such as crime stories. Here they have a diagnostic function: they feed us clues about the characters and their surroundings, and challenge us to detect what is atypical or significant in a string of stereotypes. The list as a tool of diagnosis and recognition is present in more demanding fictions too. This sort of list is one of the staples of medieval Arabic story-telling, and I mention it simply to point up the flexibility of narrative lists, since most of those which I shall discuss in this paper are very different from the character or clue-based diagnostic list.

In its most condensed and logical form, the clue list or recognition list becomes a riddle. Which of Adam's two sons [Cain and Abel] had issue, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb asks Kaʿb al-Aḥbār in Ibn Qutayba's *al-Maʿārif*.[7] (By this point, Ibn Qutayba's readers ought to be able to work out the answer.) Neither, replies Kaʿb. The son of Adam who was murdered died without issue; the issue of his murderer perished in the Flood. Consequently we are descended from the sons of Noah, who are the children of Adam's third son, Seth.

This riddle is a very short list with only two (or, including the answer, three) members; yet it is distributed between two speakers and, like all riddles, exploits the clash between two different modes of thought, pitting analysis against intuition. It turns not only on logic, but also on knowledge and on memory. ʿUmar has forgotten, or did not know, or Socratically pretends not to know, that a third son should have been included in his question. But Ibn Qutayba's readers should not have been caught out: all this information has just been given to them. The riddle is an object-lesson in the intelligent use of memorized data, and a didactic test. And if the Abbasid reader passes it and finds that he knows more than ʿUmar, and as much as Kaʿb and Ibn Qutayba, then this must tell him something about the progression of factual knowledge on the one hand and, on the other, about his own moral – and historical – duty to train his mind to use it properly. The average modern Muslim ought to be more educated than ʿUmar.

If ʿUmar's riddle is both a memory and an intelligence test, for many people lists are synonymous with mnemonics: they tell us

what it is essential that we should know, and are structured to help us memorize it. The whole of Ibn Qutayba's *al-Maʿārif* claims to be mnemonic. Everything non-essential has been omitted, he says in his foreword to the reader, and what remains has been couched in brief and easy terms and conveniently classified; consequently, 'I demand that you *learn* what is in this book and *know* it,' he says.[8] But as 'Umar's riddle shows, memory and active, discriminating knowledge are not necessarily the same.

The mnemonic classificatory list is in many ways the most sophisticated and culturally revealing kind. It is doubly symptomatic: in its readers, it assumes technical or psychological mechanisms of mental association, and a motive for applying them. (Ibn Qutayba is frank about motive. The risks of social embarrassment and social failure are a main reason why his readers should master basic facts, he says in his introduction, and he gives some ear-burning examples, which we will return to later.) On the other hand, as an end-product on the page, this type of list purports to epitomize a discipline or culture; it claims authority, as well as mastery of its subject. To the outside observer, therefore, it is an invitation to reconstruct a mentality archaeologically or to deconstruct a culture ideologically.

It was the archaeological aspect which, famously, triggered Michel Foucault's attempt to analyse 'the order of things' as experienced in classical European thought of the 16th and 17th centuries, struck as he was by the parallels between Borges' absurd list of animals, allegedly taken from 'a certain Chinese encyclopaedia'[9] and a profound alteration in 'the mode of being of things, and of the order that divided them up before presenting them to the understanding,' which he places at the beginning of the 19th century.[10] It is not only the breadth of learning and imagination required that makes any attempt to approach classical Islamic thought in a similar spirit daunting, but also the inchoate, experimental and often ephemeral nature of the discourses in question. Thus, by its nature, the didactic mnemonic list, such as those of Ibn Qutayba, is not an end-product, but an intermediate one: it has yet to be memorized; it assumes the ignorance of its users; it is symptomatic of gaps in a culture or in

a reader's powers of cultural synthesis. It is an open question whether, in compiling his *al-Maʿārif*, Ibn Qutayba was consolidating cultural gains, and meeting an actual need for knowledge, as he claims, or whether, in fact, he was trying to create one. This seems particularly true of the book's opening pages.

II

One kind of list has been scrutinized very sharply by medieval Islamicists: the *isnād*. Another kind, the biographical list, has been exploited heavily, though often not critically, in computer databases. More often, overt lists, and less obvious list structures, are taken for granted and their content is seen as more interesting than the way in which they are put together. But both lists and crypto-lists can vary in scale, complexity, and above all in the mental processes needed to produce and to use them, as even the examples of the *isnād*, the *ṭabaqa* and of 'Umar's little riddle suggest. Even cursory formal analysis throws into relief the differences and the fact that these are not natural structures. The mental reflexes which they harness in the reader are not entirely spontaneous; indeed, lists often cut across the grain of familiar, lazy thought and are a form of conceptual training, or an attempt at it.

Ibn Qutayba's *al-Maʿārif* begins, as is well known, with some rather startling quotations from the book of Genesis, and so too does Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's slightly earlier *al-Muḥabbar*. Both sets of quotations are formulated as lists, but as lists of very different content and organization. To show the extent of the difference, I will look first at Ibn Qutayba's opening lists, which, because they reproduce powerful and to us familiar Biblical *narratives*, not everyone might think of in the first instance as being lists.

The fundamental work on Ibn Qutayba's use of Genesis was done by Georges Vajda;[11] it has recently been amplified by Said Karoui.[12] Gérard Lecomte conducted a similar survey without reference to Vajda's article.[13] R. Köbert's remarks should also be mentioned, as should those of Tilman Nagel, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh and Camilla Adang,[14] and also Sidney H. Griffith's study of the uses of New (rather than Old) Testament materials in early Islamic

writing.[15] As I know neither Hebrew nor Syriac, I am largely dependent on their conclusions, but it is possible to add something from a purely Arabic perspective, since with the exception of Lecomte these authors are more concerned with the question of where Ibn Qutayba got his materials than with examining what he may have been trying to do with them.

Vajda concluded that 'les citations bibliques d'Ibn Qotayba ... proviennent d'une version arabe de la Bible faite sur le syriaque. (Ce texte syriaque est en gros celui de la Pechitta ...) ... nous croyons utile d'y insister, car on a, en général, une certaine tendance à éxagérer l'influence juive sur ce point.'[16] In addition, 'Ibn Qotayba distingue fort nettement ces deux sources [d'une part ... textes directement empruntés à la Bible ... d'autre part ... traditions attribuées au fameux Wahb b. Munabbih] l'une de l'autre et relève très loyalement les contradictions entre elles.'[17] Subsequent studies agree on Ibn Qutayba's accuracy, discrimination and use of a written translation or translations, whether produced in a Christian or Jewish milieu and whether or not complete.[18]

Lecomte notes stylistic features also alluded to by Vajda: 'les caractéristiques de ces traductions [faites soit sur l'hébreu et l'araméen, soit peut-être sur le syriaque] sont donc l'exactitude littérale, la correction grammaticale et une certaine élégance ... La traduction de chaque mot de l'original fait très souvent appel en effet aux racines correspondantes de l'arabe.'[19] The minute care with which the Biblical text has been trimmed and, in places, rearranged in new sequences (by Ibn Qutayba himself, Vajda seems to think)[20] reinforces the distinctiveness of its diction, especially as compared to that of the passages from Wahb b. Munabbih and other Muslim sources which Ibn Qutayba begins to alternate with Biblical quotations after the account of the Fall. The narratives attributed to Wahb are explanatory rather than self-contained, and are therefore weakly structured and lack internal patterning. The quotations from Genesis, on the other hand, retain its parallelism, and there is a striking degree of assonance and repetition within and across parallel members. Sidney Griffith contrasts Islamicizing renderings (of New Testament materials) such as Ibn

Isḥāq's and story-telling such as Wahb b. Munabbih's with those later, more faithful Arabic versions which try to understand their original content,[21] while Lecomte notes the steadily improving quality and quantity of Ibn Qutayba's Old and New Testament sources over time, culminating in *Mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and *al-Maʿārif*.[22]

In terms of style alone, one feels that in *al-Maʿārif* Ibn Qutayba wished to establish a polyphony between the Biblical text and the familiar styles of the *quṣṣāṣ* and, of course, the Qurʾan, though he does not quote the corresponding Qurʾanic passages. The greatest prominence is given to the Torah as the source quoted first and at most length; the Qurʾan, one supposes, is an accompanying voice in the reader's head; and the complementary explanations of Wahb and others are gradually juxtaposed with the Torah. Thanks to the length of the Biblical quotations, the reader is at once made aware of the originality of Biblical diction. It has its own vocabulary, structural rhythms and stylistic coherence, as in the following example, where assonances and repetitions are emboldened:

> ... ***kānati****'l-arḍu* ***kha****ribatan* ***khā****wiyatan wa-****kānati'l-ẓulmatu*** *'alā'l-ghamri ...* ***fa****-qāla'llāhu li-****yakuni' l-nūru fa-kāna'l-nūru*** *...* ***fa****-mayyazahu mina'l-****ẓulmati wa-sammāhu*** *nahāran* ***wa-sammā****'l-****ẓulmata*** *laylan* ***wa-kāna*** *masā'a* ***wa-kāna*** *ṣabāḥa yawmi'l-aḥad.*[23]
>
> (... the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the deep ... And God said, Let there be light: and there was light ... and he divided it from the darkness and called it Day, and the darkness he called Night. And this was the evening and this was the morning of [the first day] (Genesis 1: 2–5).

The distinctive genitive construction of the last phrase is retained throughout the six days of the Creation. Here one might be tempted to digress into a discussion of Ibn Qutayba's ideas on the relationship between *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* in poetry as expressed in another work;[24] his practice in this passage however is perhaps more enlightening than his gropings elsewhere after the formulation of a theory of adequacy. He clearly does not believe that the language of the Torah falls short of its content so that the

latter can be divorced from its intra-textual grammar and lexical conventions. In *Mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, Lecomte observes, 'Il qualifie assez souvent l'Évangile de '*ṣaḥīḥ*' ... Peut-être s'agit-il tout simplement de la traduction d'une expression significant 'le Saint-Évangile' dans la langue originelle. Ibn Qutayba n'hésite pas, en tout cas, à la reprendre à son compte ... L'Évangile et la Bible, livres révélés, sont ... bien pour lui des articles de foi. La preuve la plus éclatante ... est que tout au long du *Muḥtalif al-ḥadīt*, il tire argument des Testaments pour réfuter les allégations des adversaires de l'Orthodoxie.'[25] Combined with his respect for its scriptural authority, his care to preserve the Torah's stylistic integrity is tantamount to according it an *iʿjāz* of its own.[26] The combined aesthetic and intellectual impact on an Arabic reader must have been comparable to that of William Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch on English readers of the 1530s.

As the narrative progresses, and at the same time as stylistic polyphony is established, the content of the Torah must have struck the Arabic reader even more forcibly than the consistency and self-assurance of its diction. The imperative *kun*! with which the Qur'anic God can bring all things into being is made insistently concrete and specific. Abridging somewhat to give an outline, what we have is this:

> I have read in the Torah, in the first book thereof, that the first things that God created were heaven and earth ... and this was the evening and this was the morning (*fa-kāna masāʾa wa-kāna ṣabāḥa*) of [not quite 'the first day,' but] *yawmi'l-aḥad* (Sunday).
>
> And God – almighty and exalted – said, Let there be a firmament (*li-yakun saqfun*) in the midst of the water, and let it divide water from water; and there was a firmament (*fa-kāna saqfun*) ... and this was the evening and this was the morning of *yawm al-ithnayn* (Monday) ...
>
> And God said, Let all the water that is under heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so (*fa-kāna dhālika ka-dhālik*). And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas. Then God – almighty and exalted – said, Let the earth bring forth flowering herbs and trees with fruit each according to its (?)soil, and the earth brought them forth, and God saw that it was good.

> And this was the evening and this was the morning of *yawm al-thulāthā'* (Tuesday) (Genesis 1: 1–13)[27]

and so on until the evening and the morning of Friday, *yawm al-jumʿa* and of the seventh day, *al-yawm al-sābiʿ*, 'which He blessed and purified and made holy.'[28]

Although this is essentially a borrowed list, numbers (emboldened in the above extract) are highlighted perhaps more than they are in the original text of Genesis 1 by the simple device of prefacing the whole account of the Creation with the phrases 'the *first* book of the Torah' and 'the *first* things that God created.' (The obtrusive repetition of the translationese *kāna* incidentally serves to reinforce the list effect.) Subsidiary list structures are enhanced by slightly pruning the text so that the cosmological content takes the form of sequences that are either strictly complementary (the herbs and the trees) or strictly antithetical (the light and the darkness; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night, omitting the stars of Genesis 1: 16–18; the fishes and the birds, omitting the cattle and creeping things of Genesis 1: 24–25). Each sequence closes with the number/name of the day, instead of the fifth day being caught between God's injunction to the creatures of the waters and the winged fowl to be fruitful and multiply and His creation of the beasts of the earth (Genesis 1:22–25).[29] Condensations which reflect difficult vocabulary and constructions, as in Genesis 1:11–12, above, can be attributed to a translator; but abridgement and reorganization, as in the last example and below, should probably be attributed to Ibn Qutayba.

As well as being simplified in this way for what I assume to be mnemonic purposes, the list, strange as it may have sounded in some ways to Muslim readers, is also naturalized, insofar as it is anchored to the familiar names of the days of the week, *yawm al-aḥad, yawm al-ithnayn*, etc. This may explain why, when it comes to the sixth day, unlike the previous verses, which are only lightly edited, the passages which describe how God created Adam 'in our own image ... from the dust of the ground' (*thumma qāla ... nakhluq basharan bi-ṣūratinā fa-khalaqa Ādama min adamati 'l-arḍ*, Genesis 1: 26, 2: 7) are radically pruned and reorganized, perhaps

so as to suggest one or even several subsidiary etymologies for *al-jumʿa*, drawing on the notions of the completed creation, and man and woman in particular, 'coming together.' On this day, Adam (the etymology of whose own name has just been spelled out) declares that 'a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall follow his wife, and they shall be both one body' (Genesis 2: 24), and God commands the pair to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' (Genesis 1: 28).[30]

By this point, a comparative framework has been established by the names of the days, and phrases from the Qur'an are twice adduced in parallel to, indeed in corroboration of the Torah (al-Ṭūr 52:6 the phrase *al-baḥr al-masjūr* is glossed by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib as 'the waters beneath the Throne,' corresponding to the firmament's position between two waters, Genesis 1: 7; al-Raḥmān 55: 31 is glossed to provide an acceptable sense for God ending his work and 'resting,' Genesis 2: 2–3).[31] But in other respects, the comparative framework is very lightly sketched in. Ibn Qutayba simplifies the Biblical account to produce an uncluttered and linear narrative, but does not interfere with its essential content, or comment exegetically on points that one might expect him to explain away (as he did the notion of God's resting) or to suppress. God is allowed to create Adam in His own image, and also 'a helpmeet like himself [Adam]' (*aṣnaʿu lahu ʿawnan mithlahu*, cp. Genesis 2:18). (How must this have struck the sensibilities of Ibn Qutayba's readers? Perhaps rather like Everett Fox's 1995 rendering of the Pentateuch, designed to defamiliarize, where Eve 'became pregnant and bore Kayin. She said: ... I-have-gotten-a-man, as has YHWH!,' Genesis 4: 1.)[32] Nor does Ibn Qutayba complement the Biblical text in the ways that one might expect. Thus, after giving the Biblical account of the Temptation and Fall, he quotes Wahb b. Munabbih as saying that the *jinn* were the original inhabitants of the earth; when they revolted, God sent an army of angels against them, led by Iblīs.[33] This allows Ibn Qutayba to complete his cosmology; but nowhere does he mention Iblīs' refusal to bow down to Adam, a repeated theme of the Qurʾan. Ibn Qutayba's account of the Biblical and Qurʾanic *anbiyāʾ* is similar, though much simpler and contained within a different sort of

list structure: a mixture of the chronological and the generic *ṭabaqa*. Primacy is given to the genealogical and narrative content of the Genesis and other Biblical sources. Wahb b. Munabbih is quoted to provide a link with Arabic nomenclature and a simple chronology. The overall procedure is one of neutral comparative or complementary juxtaposition. Ibn Qutayba intrudes only once, with a long list of authoritative Muslim assertions that, as the Torah says, the son of Abraham's sacrifice was Isaac not Ishmael.[34]

What we have, then, in the opening pages of *al-Maʿārif*, is a narrative in which list features have been discreetly but firmly enhanced by editing, together with a content which is largely untouched. Clearly one purpose of the editing is to aid the assimilation of the narrative itself, but the reader is given no guidance as to what he is supposed to assimilate and why.

This neutrality and lack of explicit focus raises the crucial questions of whom Ibn Qutayba is trying to educate, in what and for what purpose. The starting point is – or would seem to be – *how* he tries to educate them. The task laid on the reader in the first pages of *al-Maʿārif* turns out to be one of some complexity. Initially it demands only a lively, but not necessarily sophisticated, literary response: the reader is expected to be sufficiently gripped by this new version of the story of the Creation and Fall to commit to memory not only an aetiology of the days of the week, but also the un-Qurʾanic speech habits of the Biblical God, serpent and Adam. (God says to Adam: *hā la-qad akalta mina'l-shajarati 'llatī nahaytuka ʿanhā* (Genesis 3: 11) – surely to be rendered in vernacular style – 'So! you have eaten of the tree ...' – rather than by Karoui's solemn 'Siehe.')[35] This is strong meat, however, and questions are bound to creep in; yet Ibn Qutayba raises only some of them. There is an inconsistency here, for 'Umar's little riddle about the descent of mankind suggests that questions ought to be asked, and that a naive response to a compelling story should develop into something more analytical. But Ibn Qutayba gives the reader very few hints as to how to use the materials set before him in a considered fashion, and also seems to be in two minds as to whether he really has any capacity for thoughtfulness. Although in his foreword he addresses the reader as a person of good birth

and breeding, who may be called upon to mingle with the great and learned,[36] one doubts his ability even to learn off the lists that Ibn Qutayba will place before him when he goes on to depict him, by implication, as an ignorant social climber likely to disgrace himself by not knowing names and dates, etc. Also, some of the lists are long, complicated and, for those with little previous grounding, difficult, each in their own way and each for different reasons from the 'Genesis lists,' no matter that they may indeed have been abridged and simplified as Ibn Qutayba maintains.

The lists of tribal genealogies are a case in point. In this instance, however, Ibn Qutayba offers a helping hand – not so much to memorizing the lists wholesale as to choosing which kind of points to remember. In his foreword, he tells the embarrassing story of someone seeking to better himself who tries to pass himself off as a member of a line of descent which is actually extinct.[37] Obligingly, in his tribal lists, he notes, among the main points of interest, which branches are extinct, which are well represented in modern cities such as Baṣra, and, for the more general needs of polite society, which produced famous poets, post as well as pre-Islamic.[38] He seems, in fact, in some respects to be offering his readers not so much a programme of self-improvement and a unifying cultural tool, as claimed by his foreword and by his book's title, 'Things that everyone should know,' but rather a menu, and the freedom to pick and choose from it according to need. In so doing, he is apparently bowing to values of the semi or self-educated, and by designing a manual of short cuts for them, freeing them from the need to acquire real intellectual discipline. There are undoubtedly contradictions in this project since, in spite of his accommodating objectives, he prefaces his book with a foreword which punctures his readers' complacency and opens it with a challenge to their receptivity.

III

Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's opening lists in *al-Muḥabbar* are the reverse of menus. Neutral, indeed impersonal as they appear, they offer

his readers or listeners no choices at all. They are tightly-knit thematic databases, exhaustively inclusive, or ruthlessly exclusive.

He too draws on Genesis in his opening passages, but on the chronological summaries of Genesis, 5: 4–32 and 11: 12–26, not the narratives (to which he may not have had access, having died in 245/860, thirty years before Ibn Qutayba). Alternative chronologies are quoted from Ibn al-Kalbī. Overall, what Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb establishes is a comparative and above all critical chronology which ties the history of the Arabs into that of the Jews and sets the chronology of Muḥammad's pre-prophetic career against that of the neighbouring kingdoms, Persia, Yemen and al-Ḥīra. One part of Arab history, however, cannot be integrated into either a general or a comparative framework: that of the *Aʿrāb* who, unlike the Quraysh, lack any continuous record or externally corroborated points of historical reference.[39]

At this point, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb closes his databank of pre-Islamic chronologies and opens another, discrete databank, this time based not primarily on dates but on names. The subjects are the Prophet and all the caliphs (including al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr) down to the mid-Abbasids.[40] A large part of these entries, especially the earlier ones, consists of lists of the type for which Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb is probably best known, though he is not their only or earliest exponent: lists of maternal ancestors – mother's male lineage; mother's mother's male lineage, etc.[41] These should be related to the lists of the Prophet's female forebears on his father's side,[42] the lists of his daughters and sons-in-law,[43] and of the sons-in-law of caliphs from Abū Bakr to al-Wāthiq,[44] and of those married to the descendants of the Prophet's grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and the five members of the *shūrā*,[45] which follow almost immediately after this 'history' of the caliphate. Together, they show the extent of common ancestry and intermarriage, often serial marriage across genealogical generations, between the early Muslim leaders up to and including Muʿāwiya.

The other main component of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's regnal tables is the lists of leaders of the pilgrimage, which introduce a chronological and therefore more overtly analytical element. This

is particularly important for the Abbasids, where it becomes the main indicator of clan or family inter-reliance, female genealogy having ceased to be traceable for caliphs whose mothers are *umm walad*. The entries up to al-Manṣūr, the first Abbasid caliph with a slave mother, consist almost entirely of these two kinds of list, and contain no narrative elements or references to political events. They do, however, when read sequentially, establish a curve showing the persistence of clan links and their breaks and re-orientations.

Like modern databases, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's in his *al-Muḥabbar* seems to have been fairly fluid in conception. His lists are bolted together but not necessarily interdependent. In this respect, *al-Muḥabbar* is an example of old-fashioned part oral scholarship, and its procedures are the continued working out of a more general project exemplified in other works of his.[46] But again like some modern databases, many of the lists in *al-Muḥabbar* have stringent limitations of design that make it impossible to use them simply as menus of independently useful information; and there are elements of latent cross-reference such as those described above which suggest that part of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's project was eventually to make a database full enough to serve as an alternative to narrative history.[47] Such a database would be best deployed through the newer medium of the book or booklets, where the patterns established could be seen at a glance. In many ways Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb is like a modern historian discovering a new technology and using it to speed up old processes. His aim seems to be to increase the applications of, for example, female genealogy, while at the same time rationalizing the topics to which it is applied by narrowing their focus to exclude anything but hard, non-narrativized data. His main objective as a historian – perhaps one should call him a historical technician – appears to be to use the *organization* of data (a) to clarify the relationship of probable, possible or unascertainable points of reference (as in his chronologies), and (b) to throw up a new order of data, relational as opposed to narrative or declarative, as in his marriage lists and lists of leaders of the pilgrimage. Overall, however, his target remains the individual topic. The common feature which makes

these part of a larger but only partly realized design is that the lists through which he expresses topics are compatible, being consistent in format and in their criteria of inclusion, and therefore provide the basis for a coherent analytical approach to the encoding and presentation of of knowledge.

IV

Speaking of *awā'il* literature – but his remarks could apply just as well to Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's lists, and even more so to Ibn Qutayba's lists of things one must know in order to save face socially – Albrecht Noth observed: '... it is important to realise that the form of *awā'il* also offered vast opportunities for entertainment and displays of knowledge and cleverness. One can hardly read very far in the *awā'il* literature, where topics extend to such trivia as the first person to say 'hello' ... without concluding that the modern fascination with ... games of random knowledge is ... one of great antiquity.'[48] Knowing who were the legendary founders of Arab mores may not, in fact, be trivial, even if the knowledge lends itself to trivial uses;[49] and even the random use described by Noth would presumably call for some knowledge of anecdotal context in order not to misfire. Ibn Qutayba, for example, says that one must know 'what gave rise to a well-known saying,' not just the form of words.[50] On occasion, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's lists are fully fleshed out anecdotally. He is especially fond of lists of adventurers and murderers. This kind of list cannot be reduced to a skeleton, since its whole point lies in circumstantial detail: the lurid and elaborate sequences of events, the rhetorical texture of the speeches. There is a sizeable group of such stories in *al-Muḥabbar*, and he put together two other booklets of murder stories.[51] But as a scholar among scholars, known equally as an *akhbārī* and as a genealogist, he could assume his peers' acquaintance with a common fund of the more usual historical anecdotes and specialize in his writings in developing elegant models of non-narrative list or in retailing only the kinds of story for which he had a particular predilection. In other words, his lists are based on recognition: his readers are learned enough to

supply the *akhbār* from which they are derived. He, in turn, can give these raw materials a new configuration and turn them into analytical facts: such and such a combination of relationships or characteristics is unique, and can be expressed by a list which has only one member;[52] such and such a characteristic is shared: here is a list of those who shared it (and whom, presumably, the reader should avoid confusing if he comes across the same *topos* – e.g., men so handsome that they were obliged to veil themselves from women[53] – in different *akhbār*.)

The fact that Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb was a specialist, who confined himself to congenial materials and addressed himself to fellow-specialists, is what makes it instructive that *al-Muḥabbar* should have been identified as a prototype for Ibn Qutayba's *al-Maʿārif*, a work of quite different inspiration. Ibn Qutayba, in his self-imposed role of vulgarizer, by contrast with Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, was prepared to put his hand to tasks for which he was not particularly well fitted,[54] and, in the course of his writing career, to master sources (such as new translations of Biblical materials) which had not formed part of his own curriculum. There are, in reality, as has been shown, no grounds for accusing him of calquing his *al-Maʿārif* on *al-Muḥabbar*, let alone plagiarizing it.[55] There is substantial overlap of coverage, but the crucial difference is that Ibn Qutayba seeks primarily to create cultural memory, not to organize it.

In the *Maʿārif* as a whole, he operates on the opposite premise from Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb: recognition cannot be guaranteed since his readers are ignorant to a greater or lesser degree, and therefore data cannot be configured critically but only grouped in loose mnemonic classes. Whatever information the reader is told is memorable has the standing of a fact, whatever its type or form or the classificatory context given to it, whatever aspects of it the reader happens to seize upon, and whether or not he can link it to any previous knowledge of his own. Most of these *memorabilia* are indeed part of the common stock, and so have achieved the status of genuine fact, in the sense that whatever is remembered by cultural consensus is a fact; but in the opening pages of *al-Maʿārif* Ibn Qutayba is deliberately, for at least one part of his

readership, trying to create a false cultural memory: a 'memory' of the Torah which had never been part of Muslim culture. To any recent converts among his readers, he was suggesting a similar fiction of consensus by intimating that there was a ready-made place in the culture for them to integrate their own scriptural memories into.

By giving the status of *memorabilia* to narratives which are not part of the culture, Ibn Qutayba, wittingly or unwittingly, is raising the question of what the modalities of knowledge are, and what constitute its objects. To quote the Biblical accounts of the Creation, Temptation and Fall rather than Islamicized paraphrases is to give the status of 'something that should be known' to their language and imagery, to their aesthetic and imaginative as well as to their historical content. This is not spelled out to the reader; he must make what he can of it; but it suggests two things: one, that Ibn Qutayba does not think that knowledge can, or perhaps should, be fully defined and its reception fully controlled; and two, that he sees imagination itself as a kind of knowledge and a means of expanding the field of knowledge.

Though they use similar materials and even superficially similar techniques, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb and Ibn Qutayba are not, it seems, mapping the same field of knowledge or expressing the same relationship between knowledge and memory. Neither, however, offers a uniform perspective, *al-Maʿārif* being particularly uneven in execution. That both were trying to fashion a new kind of cultural memory seems certain; neither is merely epitomizing ambient received ideas. The grounding of some of their lists and the connections between them remain in some respects as seemingly incoherent as those between the items in Borges' 'Chinese' list – but are also full of archaeological promise for an understanding of intellectual experiment in the mid-3rd/9th century.[56]

Notes

1. This paper was first given at the 33rd annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Washington D.C.,

November 1999. I am grateful to the panel discussant, Keith Lewinstein, for his remarks, and to the School of History, University of St Andrews, for the grant which made it possible for me to attend the meeting.

2. 'What the tribal tradition preserved was above all personalia ... the chit-chat and gossip of the Arab tribal session. Of such material a 9th-century scholar was to make an entire collection, the *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, which must rank with the *Guinness Book of Records* among the greatest compilations of useless information ... [Albrecht] Noth was also struck by the absurdity of this book,' Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp.10, 206. Noth's comments are in fact more analytical; see note 4 below.

3. *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and tr. Bayard Dodge (New York, 1970), vol.1, pp.98, 104, 191, 234–236, 344. See also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* (Cairo, 1349/1931), vol.2, no.751, pp.277–278, for Thaʿlab's testimony to his abilities, and Ilse Lichtenstädter, 'Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb and his *Kitâb al-Muḥabbar*,' *JRAS* (1939), pp.2–5 for his teachers, pupils and scholarly reputation in his own and succeeding centuries.

4. 'The *Muḥabbar* especially tries to organise [genealogical] material in the form of lists, an endeavour also occurring in [Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's] *Munammaḳ*, although not to the [same] extent' (Ilse Lichtenstädter, 'Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb,' *EI2*, vol.7, p.402). Albrecht Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-critical Study*, tr. Michael Bonner (Princeton, NJ, 1994), p.97, describes some of the lists in *al-Muḥabbar*, identifying the extreme case of a list containing only one member; pp.96–104 give a general typology of lists in early historiography according to content and ideological purpose.

5. Lichtenstädter, 'Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb,' p.4: 'The author's principal endeavour ... is not to give the full report of the events, but to give a skeleton account of them laying emphasis on the collection of the facts.'

6. See Gérard Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba (mort en 276/889): L'homme, son œuvre, ses idées* (Damascus, 1965), pp.86, 91.

7. Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwat 'Ukāsha (Cairo, 1992), p.25.

8. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p.6, l.14, p.7, l.3.

9. '(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ... (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera* ... (n) that from a long way off look like flies.'

10. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, 2000), originally published under the title *Les Mots et*

les choses (Paris, 1966), pp.xv, xxii. See also p.31: '... knowledge at its archaeological level – that is, at the level of what made it possible ... [the] necessity lying at the heart of their knowledge.'

11. Georges Vajda, 'Judaeo-Arabica. 1. Observations sur quelques citations bibliques chez Ibn Qotayba,' *Revue des Études Juives*, 99 (1935), pp.68–80.

12. Said Karoui, *Die Rezeption der Bibel in der frühislamischen Literatur am Beispiel der Hauptwerke von Ibn Qutayba (gest. 276/889)*, Heidelberg University dissertation (Heidelberg, 1997), pp.43, 146–223, 268–283 and tables pp.286–350.

13. Gérard Lecomte, 'Les citations de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament dans l'œuvre d'Ibn Qutayba,' *Arabica*, 5 (1958), pp.34–46.

14. R. Köbert, 'Die Genesiszitate in Ibn Qutayba's *kitāb al-ma'ārif*,' *Biblica*, 45 (1964), pp.75–79; Tilman Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Bonn University dissertation (Bonn, 1967), pp.10–16; Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, NJ, 1992), pp.53n, 121, 122 and her 'Tawrāt,' *EI2*, vol.10 p.394; Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden, 1996), pp.32–35, 71, 112–114.

15. Sidney H. Griffith, 'The Gospel in Arabic: An Inquiry into its Appearance in the First Abbasid Century,' *Oriens Christianus*, 69 (1985), pp.126–167.

16. Vajda, 'Observations,' p.80. M. P. Weizman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* (Cambridge, 1999) makes brief references to Arabic translations of Old Testament passages, but not, unfortunately, to Ibn Qutayba's.

17. Vajda, 'Observations,' p.68.

18. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, p.121, would like to argue for a predominantly oral milieu, but in the phrase which she cites in proof, *wajadtu fi'l-Tawrāt*, *wajadtu* is a technical term indicating the opposite.

19. Lecomte, 'Citations,' p.39; cf. Vajda, 'Observations,' p.72.

20. Vajda, 'Observations,' pp.69, 72. Lecomte, 'Citations,' pp.39, 44, suggests that Ibn Qutayba may have improved the style of his sources.

21. Griffith, 'The Gospel in Arabic,' pp.137, 140, 149–150, 151.

22. Lecomte, 'Citations,' pp.44–45.

23. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, p.9.

24. Ibn Qutayba, ed. and tr. M. Gaudefroy-Desmombynes, *Introduction au Livre de la poésie et des poètes* (Paris, 1947), pp.6–13 (*aqsām al-shi'r: [mā]*

ḥasuna lafẓuhu wa-jāda maʿnāhu ... [mā] jāda maʿnāhu wa-qaṣarat alfāẓuhu ʿanhu).

25. Lecomte, 'Citations,' pp.44–45.

26. As Lazarus-Yafeh points out (*Intertwined Worlds*, p.122), in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1373/1954), Ibn Qutayba says that the Gospel has been translated 'from Syriac' into other languages, and the Torah and Psalms 'and other/all the rest of God's scriptures (*sāʾir kutub Allāh taʿālā*)' have been translated into Arabic; there are no translators, on the other hand, able to render the Qurʾan into other languages, *ibid.*, p.16. However, he does not attribute this to the inimitability of God's speech as such, but rather to the limitations of human languages and translators: 'this,' he says, 'is because non-Arabs do not have the capacity for *majāz* (figurative speech) that Arabs do.' It would seem to follow that 'God's [non-Arabic] scriptures' can retain their integrity in Arabic.

27. Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl*, pp.9–10. Verses 11–12 (the herbs and trees and their modes of reproduction) clearly gave the translator problems of lexicon and construction.

28. Ibid., p.11.

29. Ibid., p.10.

30. Ibid., p.11.

31. Ibid., pp.10, 11.

32. See Gerald Hammond, 'The Bible in English Translation' in Olive Classe, ed. *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* (London and Chicago, 2000), vol.1, p.152. Although elsewhere Ibn Qutayba says that God's Qurʾanic attributes must be believed in without questioning their modality, he also takes care to explain the 'extra' attributes which appear in *ḥadīth* figuratively, see Gérard Lecomte, ed. and tr., *Le Traité des divergences du ḥadīt d'Ibn Qutayba (mort en 276/889)* (Damascus, 1962), p.xxviii and sections LII-LXIV, pp.228–249.

33. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p.14.

34. Ibid., pp.35–38.

35. Ibid., p.13; Karoui, *Die Rezeption*, pp.181, 183.

36. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p.1.

37. Ibid., p.2.

38. See, for example, Ibid., pp.66, 81: tribal branches still represented in Kūfa and/or Baṣra (families of physicians and muezzins respectively); pp.68, 74, 76, 77, 90, 96: poets; p.73: the clan of al-Thurayyā, beloved of the poet ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, p.81: the clan of the philologist al-Aṣmaʿī, p.82: extinct and near-extinct branches.

39. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstädter (Hyderabad, 1361/1942), pp.6–8.

40. The last caliph on the list is al-Muʿtaḍid (279–289/892–902). Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb died in 245/860, his *rāwī* al-Sukkarī died in 275/888. On grounds of content and style, the last authentic entry in the list is probably that on Hārūn al-Wāthiq (*ca.*227–232/842–847); this is the last caliph whose sons-in-law are enumerated; Lichtenstädter, 'Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb,' p.18.

41. For differences between the ways in which Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb classifies and traces female genealogies in *al-Muḥabbar* and *Ummahāt al-nabī*, see Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad, ed. *Ummahāt al-nabī li-Abī Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb* (Cairo, 1402/1982), pp.51–53.

42. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, pp.45–52.

43. Ibid., pp.52–53.

44. Ibid., pp.54–62.

45. Ibid., pp.62–65, 66–70; the last list is discussed briefly by CE Bosworth, 'Shūrā, 1. In Early Islamic History,' *EI2*, vol.9, p.505.

46. Cf. Lichtenstädter, 'Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb,' pp.4, 13.

47. Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (2nd rev. ed. Leiden, 1968), places a change in method not long after Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb when, because of the proliferation of historical data and the complexity of modern history, it became 'necessary to find more economic principles of arrangement than were offered by the *ḥabar* form,' Ibid., p.70. He discusses Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb as an *akhbārī* rather than a maker of lists, and so does not view him as having attempted 'a new start in the forms of Muslim historiography.'

48. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, p.108.

49. See, for example, Ibn Qutayba's entry on Yaʿrub b. Qaḥṭān, *al-Maʿārif*, p.626. This is the first in his list of kings, and itself consists entirely of mythic 'firsts': the first man to speak Arabic, the ancestor of Yaman, he was also the first to be greeted by his sons with the salutation *abayta'l-laʿna wa-anʿim ṣabāḥan* – a regal version of 'hello.' Ibn Qutayba's list of *awā'il*, Ibid., pp.551–558, includes founders of Arab and Muslim culture and mores, and also modern 'firsts,' such as the names of the first [Muslim] babies born in Baṣra and Kūfa, Ibid., p.557.

50. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p.1; see the corresponding list pp.608–620, '*Qiṣaṣ qawm jarā'l-mathal bi-asmā'ihim.*'

51. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, pp.192–212: '*futtāk al-Jāhiliyya,*' Ibid., pp.212–232: '*futtāk al-Islām*'; in ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn ed., *Nawādir al-makhṭūṭāt* (repr. Beirut, 1411/1991), vol.2, pp.129–223: *Kitāb asmā'*

al-mughtālīn mina'l-ashrāf fi'l-Jāhiliyya wa'l-Islām wa-asmā' man qutila mina'l-shuʿarā', two booklets joined with a third in the Ms.

52. Cf. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, at note 4 above.

53. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, pp.232–233; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p.206.

54. If we go along with Lecomte's estimate of him as a man lacking in aesthetic insight who nevertheless understood the cultural significance of poetry well enough to have written two books on it, Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba*, pp.419–410.

55. Lecomte reviews medieval and modern discussions of the issue in his *Ibn Qutayba*, p.206

56. A point suggested in a general way by Franz Rosenthal in his article '*Awā'il*,' *EI2*, vol.1, p.758.

12

A Jonah Theme in the Biography of Ibn Tūmart

David J. Wasserstein

My purpose in this article is to demonstrate the presence in the traditional biography of Muḥammad b. Tūmart of a folklore motif, and to explore some of the implications of this. It is a pleasure to do this in a volume offered to Wilferd Madelung, who has done so much to enable us to understand the nature of religious biography in the Islamic world.

Introduction

The biographical tradition about Muḥammad b. Tūmart is clearly hagiographical in character.[1] Much that is in it is there not in order to tell us what really happened, but justifies or helps to explain things about his career in ways that reflect the hagiographical, the creation of a sacred history, and the like. One detail in particular in this biographical tradition seems to me to belong rather to this latter category than to that of mere factual detail. It has not been recognized properly for what it is because of a small complex of reasons: it occurs in its fullest and clearest form only in one of our sources, and that a fairly recently published

one; in the others, it has been pared down to little more than a passing remark; and even in its fullest form its folkloric character, and hence also its purpose, may not be absolutely obvious. This latter fact may have made it all the easier for it to be accepted as simple unadorned truth. As will be seen, the folkloric character of the story also brings it close to a Biblical story, from the book of Jonah. Nonetheless, I believe that it can, indeed must, be argued that it has no direct link with the Biblical story.

Texts

The life of Ibn Tūmart, the Mahdi and founder of the Almohad movement and creator of its doctrine, is treated in a good number and a fairly wide variety of sources. These include historical and biographical texts and, in their present forms, come largely from outside the Almohad tradition.[2] Some of the sources clearly come originally from inside the tradition, but, as is now widely recognized, they may have suffered, like other texts, from a process of de-Almohadization, in the period following the decline of the movement and its disappearance as a political force; this however is by no means always as certain as we should like it to be, nor is it always the case with other texts, more closely related to the doctrine itself. A good number of the available sources are biased either for or against Ibn Tūmart, and this affects the nature of the material which they report.[3] Some of our texts, nonetheless, are fairly early, and this fact may endow them with some special interest in the present context.

The traditional biography of Ibn Tūmart tells us that he spent some time in al-Andalus, before going off to the East, where he met al-Ghazālī, as well as studying extensively in various centres, before returning to the Islamic West.[4] Our sources tell us of this return in various ways, and it is the journey back to the West which offers us the material of concern here. The story is narrated or mentioned in a number of sources.

I present the texts here in roughly chronological order of their authors' lives or dates of their composition, so far as they can be ascertained. I give them in English and not in Arabic, not from

any lack of scholarly purism, but because no part of my argument here depends on any claim as to actual textual borrowing. I do not think that any such borrowing is involved here (with one very minor exception, noted below). The texts themselves are in any case all easily available in any good library.

Ibn al-Athīr (555–630/1160–1233)[5]

> So [Muḥammad Ibn Tūmart] made a pilgrimage from there and went back to the Maghrib, and when he was travelling by sea from Alexandria westwards he criticized the forbidden (things that were going on) on the ship and compelled those on board to fulfil the (obligation to) pray and to read the Qur'an until finally he came to al-Mahdiyya, whose ruler at that time was Yaḥyā b. Tamīm in the year 505/1111.

Ibn al-Qifṭī (568–646/1172–1248)[6]

> In the historical work drawn up in the form of annals by al-Qāḍī al-Akram b. al-Qifṭī, the vizier of Aleppo, we find the following passage: "In this year" – that is, towards the close of 511/early 1118 – "Muḥammad b. Tūmart left Egypt in the dress of a jurisconsult (*fī ziyy al-fuqahā'*), after having pursued his studies here and in other countries, and he arrived at Bijāya (Bugia)." God knows who is in the right.

ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī (d. after 621/1224)[7]

> So he travelled by sea and I have heard that on the ship he maintained his habit of enjoining the good and forbidding the bad, to such a degree that the people of the ship threw him into the sea, and he stayed (there) for more than half a day, moving in the water (behind) the boat with nothing (bad) happening to him. And when they saw that, they let someone down to him who took him up out of the sea. And he impressed them greatly (*wa-aẓuma fī ṣudūrihim*) and they continued honouring him until he came to Bijāya in the land of the Maghrib.

Ibn Khallikān (608–681/1211–1282)[8]

In his biographical collection, Ibn Khallikān has an account which shares some of the matter of our main story, but it clearly derives from a different source:

> On quitting Cairo, he proceeded to Alexandria and embarked there for his native country. While in the East, he dreamed that he had drunk up the sea at two different times. He was no sooner on board the vessel than he began to reform the profane conduct of the crew, obliging them to say their prayers at the regular hours and to read (each time) a portion of the Qur'an. In this occupation he persevered till his arrival at al-Mahdiyya, a city of Ifrīqiya, which was then, 505 [1111–12], under the rule of the *amīr* Yaḥyā b. Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs al-Ṣanhājī.'

Ibn al-Qaṭṭān

Our fullest source here is Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, about whose life not much is known. This writer was confused for some time with his father, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Qaṭṭān (562–628/1167–1231), notably by Lévi-Provençal who attributed the 14 folios of the text of *Naẓm al-jumān* that he published in the 1920s to Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī.[9] But the error was rapidly noted and when the text of the 82 folios so far known was edited by Maḥmūd ʿAlī Makkī in 1964, the error was corrected and the text was correctly re-attributed to the son, Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan Ibn al-Qaṭṭān.[10] We have so little information about our Ibn al-Qaṭṭān that we do not know exactly when he lived, but Fricaud places his activities during the period 645–665/1242–1266. In his *Naẓm al-jumān*, he tells us the following about Ibn Tūmart's journey homewards from the East:[11]

> An example of his hindering (may God, may He be exalted, be pleased with him) is his preventing the people of the ship from drowning him, which they were very keen on doing, and the example God, may He be exalted, showed concerning that. That was that he – may God, may He be exalted, be pleased with him – travelled by sea in a ship from Alexandria, going to the lands of the Maghrib. He saw some wine in the ship, and so he poured it out. The owner of the wine shouted at him and insulted him and laid his hand(s) on him, and the people of the ship came together round him and petitioned him[12] until he kept silent. Then the time for prayer came and he bade them pray, but they paid no attention to him, but he insisted that they should do so; so they got angry and were keen to throw him out of the ship. Then the

> sea grew tempestuous and they were like to be drowned; and then a man who was (returning from) a pilgrimage came to them and said: 'Put yourselves right by doing as this man wants; perhaps God, may He be exalted, will pardon you.' So they approached him imploring him and beseeching him, and he said to them – may God, may He be exalted, be pleased with him – pray and perform the ablution and pray. So God, may He be exalted, cleared away what was (attacking) them, and the ship went on with a good wind; and the (people of the ship) kept asking him to pray (for them) every day.

Ibn Abī Zarʿ (d.710/1310 or 720/1320)[13]

> The author of the book continues his tale. Muḥammad al-Mahdī, trusting in the help of God, left the East in order to bring the law of the Lord and the *sunna* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the West. He set off on 1 Rabīʿ I 510 [13 July 1116], and traversed the various cities of Africa and the Maghrib, everywhere preaching virtue, abstinence and mistrust of the things of this world. In this way he reached the Tchours of Tajura, in the environs of Tlemcen, where he stopped.

Al-Nuwayrī (677–733/1278–1332):[14] Al-Nuwayrī also reports the return home of Ibn Tūmart, but his passage differs only in minor textual details from that of Ibn al-Athīr.

Ibn Khaldūn (732–808/1332–1406)[15]

> 'The imām Muḥammad [Ibn Tūmart] having become an ocean of learning, a torch of the faith, set out for the Maghrib.'

Ibn Qunfudh (d.809/1406 or 810/1407)[16]

> 'And the imām al-Mahdī [scil. Ibn Tūmart] set off for the Maghrib accompanied by ʿAbd al-Muʾmin b. ʿAlī.'

These texts offer us a range of versions of Ibn Tūmart's return to the West. We have simple unadorned statements of simple fact: he returned to the West, he returned by ship, even that he spent his time on board ship lecturing his fellow-sailors on the need to pray and fulfil other religious obligations. We also have a story: the sailors got fed up with him and threw him into the sea, but

seeing him still bobbing about in the waves half a day later they took him back up out of the water. This, although not so simple a version, and tending towards wonders, is not the most highly developed. The version of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, alone among all of those looked at here, draws in the supernatural and the divine. In this version we have the intrusion of a miracle: not only does Ibn Tūmart return to the West by ship; not only does he lecture his fellow-travellers on their religious obligations; not only do they get fed up with him and consider throwing him into the sea; but now we have also the tempest and Ibn Tūmart's part in calming the raging of the sea. This is a new element in the story, and it changes radically the structure of the story of his return to the West. In this version elements that were ready to hand (whether true or not) – the return, the ship, the lecturing, the anger – have been taken and used in combination with other elements – the rising of a storm, the (desire to) cast the giver of unwelcome advice into the sea, his ability to calm the sea, thus marking him as a man of special character – to build a story that functions not simply as a linking element in a longer biography but as an element with more than purely mechanical meaning and significance in the sacred biography of a religious leader.

The last couple of entries in this catalogue make it clear that the story of Ibn Tūmart's return from the East, whatever relationship it may have to the truth, has now become nothing more than a simple factual detail in the overall story of the career of the great man. From serving as the essential backdrop for the story of some colourful adventures on board ship between Alexandria and the West, it has become the story itself: now he does nothing more than travel from the east to the Maghrib. It may be that this is also how the story began its life, as we see, for example, in the version offered by Ibn al-Athīr (and, following him, by al-Nuwayrī) and Ibn al-Qifṭī. It is striking that Ibn Abī Zarʿ offers a version that simply brings him back to the West, possibly even, at least by implication, by land, not by sea. Whatever the truth about this, we see in this group of texts a very rapid realization of the potential which a sea journey offers for expansion and development in different directions.

The Folklore Connection

The fuller forms of the story are not just clearly hagiographical. If the dramatic picture of the Mahdi floating along unharmed in the ship's wake for half a day is intended to show that he was a man of remarkable character, the story in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān goes further: it is intended to show that thanks to his relationship with the Almighty, he could even calm a storm through his prayers. However, this story is also an example of a variation of a motif found in a variety of folkloric contexts. The motif in question is classified by Stith Thompson as that of 'the man thrown overboard to placate a storm.'[17] Thompson lists examples of the type from Lapland, Ireland, Iceland, from Buddhist myth and Korean sources, as well as Jewish and even later Islamic sources.[18] All of the stories have it in common that they describe a man being thrown overboard in order to placate a storm (or a storm sent by a god). Here, in our story in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, this is precisely the scenario that we have. While the details of the story are different here, largely because of the religious needs and the narrative point, the basic structure of the story remains the same as in the other versions which are known.

The Biblical Connection

Folklore collections are not the only place where we find this motif. We find it also in the Bible. The first chapter of the book of Jonah is little more than a variant on this theme. Jonah 1:4–16 (I quote from the King James version):

> But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.
>
> And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast

lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

The structure of the story, as a story, here is a little different from that in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, but the narrative element of throwing a man overboard in order to calm an angry sea, a sea made angry by God, is again the same as what we have already seen elsewhere. My impression is that the folkloric character of this element in the Jonah tale has not been noticed before. While other elements of the Jonah story have attracted analysis of this sort, most particularly his adventure inside the whale in Chapter 2, this element seems to have escaped such attention.[19] At all events, I have not found any such description or characterization of this passage in the material on the Biblical book that I have been able to examine. Nonetheless, that appears to be the character of this first chapter of Jonah. What we have here is merely a variant on the broader theme identified in Stith Thompson's great work.

Thompson does not list our example, nor does he look at the Biblical case or at any of the other examples of this motif that could be cited from classical Greek and Latin literatures.[20] The

Biblical and classical material not only helps to provide broader geographical cover for the distribution of the folk-motif, in a general sense; it also offers Mediterranean material, which is particularly valuable in the present context. It demonstrates that the motif – not in the form of a text, and not with a necessary relation to a specific Biblical or Qur'anic character – was part of the free-floating corpus of folk material available in the medieval Mediterranean region.

This latter point is crucial for my argument, as I am concerned to hold that it is not the Jonah story that is in use here, but rather the folk element that appears also in the Jonah story. This is both because of the obvious differences between the two stories and because it seems to me that the use of the Jonah story of the Bible, or a direct reference to it as a source or a model, would have given the story in the biography of Ibn Tūmart an altogether different character and meaning.

Sources

We can easily see why such a story, with its potential to impress the character of the Almohad Mahdi on his followers, might have appealed to Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, or to his source. What is less clear is how Ibn al-Qaṭṭān or his source might have come by this narrative element in the first place. Can we imagine it to have come from a literary background? The differences between the versions that we have here and the Biblical story of Jonah are enough to demonstrate that we should not see the Bible as the proximate source of our story. However, as often, it is possible that not the Bible but a text dependent on, and expanding, the Biblical text might have been the source. The obvious place to look for such a source, in Islamic texts, is the Qur'an, or literature of the type represented by the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* texts. We have in fact several versions of the Jonah story in Arabic, two in the Qur'an itself and two in texts under the title *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*; all are of interest here.

First, the Qur'anic versions of the Jonah story. The first of these comes in the *sūra* bearing Jonah's name, 10:22–23:[21]

It is He who conveys you
on the land and the sea;
and when you are in the ship –
and the ships run with them
with a fair breeze,
and they rejoice in it,
there comes upon them a strong wind,
and waves come upon them from every side,
and they think they are encompassed;
they call upon God,
making their religion His sincerely:
'If Thou deliverest us from these, surely
we shall be among the thankful.'
Nevertheless when He has delivered them
behold, they are insolent
in the earth, wrongfully.
O men, your insolence is
only against yourselves;
the enjoyment of this present life,
then unto Us you shall return,
then We shall tell you
what you were doing.

The second Qur'anic reference is at 37:140:

Jonah too was one of the Envoys;
when he ran away to the laden ship
and cast lots, and was one of the rebutted,
then the whale swallowed him down,
and he blameworthy.

As can be seen from these Qur'anic versions of the story of Jonah, the first refers in passing to the storm but neither refers directly to Jonah being thrown into the waves or to any link between this and the passing of the storm. We have here prayer in adversity, and reward for that, but this is nothing very special, and we find no mechanistic link, far less any folkloric story.

The *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature offers much more detail about Jonah's adventures. Our first witness here comes in the work of this title attributed to al-Thaʿlabī:[22]

> I heard that ... Yūnus went off angry with his Lord, and the Devil (al-Shayṭān) tried to make him err, so as to think that 'We have no power over him'; but he had ancestors and (a record of) worship, so God refused to leave him to the Devil. So when Yūnus came to the sea, he found some people boarding a vessel, and they took him on board without any fare.[23] And when he entered it the ship stuck fast and would not move, while the ships were going past to right and left. And the sailors said 'A slave running away from his master (must be) on board, for this is the sign of a ship which has a runaway on board: it does not go.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Yūnus. And he said, 'I am the runaway slave.' And they said, 'You will be cast into the water.' So they cast lots a second time, and a third. But the lot (still) fell out upon Yūnus. So he threw himself into the water. And that is (what is meant by) the words (of God, may He be exalted) 'So he drew lots and was one of those refuted.' And when he fell into the water, God appointed a large fish (*ḥūt*) for him, which swallowed him up. And God, may He be exalted, inspired the fish (saying), I did not make him for you as food, but we made you as a refuge for him and a dwelling place; so take him and do not break a (single one of) his bone(s) and do not tear his flesh. And another fish swallowed the (first) fish, and took him to his dwelling place in the sea, and another fish swallowed him [the second fish] up and took him off from that place until he brought him over al-Ubulla,[24] and then over the Tigris. Then he took him off to Nineveh and it is said that God, may He be exalted, made the skin of the fish thin for him so that he could see everything that was in the sea.[25] And when he brought him finally to the bottom of the sea Yūnus heard a sound and he said to himself, What is that? And God, may He be exalted, sent him inspiration while he was in the belly of the fish, (to let him know) that this is the song of praise of the animals of the sea, so he gave praise from the belly of the fish, and the angels heard his song of praise, and they said, 'O our Lord, we hear a faint familiar voice in an unknown place.' He said, 'That is my slave Yūnus. He has disobeyed me and so I have shut him up in the belly of the fish in the sea.' So they replied, '(You mean) the faithful slave who used to send up a good deed to you every day and (every) night?' He said, 'Yes.' So at that they interceded for him ...

I make no apology for quoting a little more of this beautiful story than is absolutely necessary for my argument here. It is

noteworthy that in this version, with its details of the angels and the songs of praise, while we have most of the story found in the Biblical account, we lack the narrative element that is central to the folkloric motif, that of the calming of the sea caused by the throwing of Jonah into the waves. In this version, instead of a storm coming up, the ship itself is unable to move, because of the presence of the runaway slave on board, and instead of the sailors throwing Jonah into the sea, Jonah throws himself in. It is to be supposed that once Jonah had left the ship, the divine prohibition on its moving was removed, and it was able to advance. In these details we still see the essential structure of the motif. However, as the ship is not central to the tale of Jonah in this version, once Jonah has left it we hear no more about it. Nonetheless, this element of the calming of the sea, or the ability of the ship to move through the water, is central because it is this that gives meaning to the entire complex of details composed of the storm, the runaway and the casting of the runaway into the water. In the Bible it is present; in the other folkloric material it is present; in the story about Ibn Tūmart by Ibn al-Qaṭṭān it is present. In the Qurʾan, as we have seen, it is absent. And here too, in the story by al-Thaʿlabī, it is absent. It may be implicit here and in the Qurʾan, but in this version it is in no way central to the story-teller's concern, and it is not mentioned. This story cannot, therefore, have been a way-station on the path by which Ibn al-Qaṭṭān's story came to its present form.

The second version comes in the text attributed to al-Kisāʾī:[6]

> He saw a ship about to sail and said, 'Take me with you.' When they took him on board with them, the winds churned up the sea about the ship and they almost sank. They began to pray, but Jonah kept silent. The people on the ship asked him, 'Why do you not pray with us?'
>
> 'Because I have lost my wife and children,' he answered.
>
> 'Then,' they said, 'there is no doubt that this is because of you, Jonah.' They cast lots, and they fell against him; but they said, 'The lots fall and may be mistaken. Let us cast names upon the sea.' So each one wrote his name on a lead ball and threw it into the sea.[27] The ball of each except Jonah sank, but his name appeared on the surface of the water.

> Then a great fish appeared with its mouth open and cried out, 'Jonah, I have come from India in search of you.' Jonah threw himself into the sea, and the fish swallowed him up and took him first to the Mediterranean and then to the Coral Castle.[28] The length of time he was in the belly of the fish has been disputed: some have said forty days, but Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said only three days.[29]

Here again, in another beautiful version of the story, we note that there is no reference to the ship, or to the storm, after Jonah has thrown himself out; as in the first version, these matters are not really relevant to the central concern of the story in this form.

In these two stories, despite the significant differences between them, at just the point of interest to us here, we can see how the overall development of the story has led to the use of the folkloric motif of the calming of a storm by the casting of a passenger into the raging deep. The differences make it certain that these two versions of the Jonah story could not have served as the source or even as the model for the story about Ibn Tūmart. And this in its turn means that we can exclude the Jonah story as a whole, in all its versions, as the source from which this narrative element in the biography of Ibn Tūmart may have been drawn.

Implications

The implications of the argument offered here are interesting, because they may well both fit in with, and lend support to, arguments put forward in the past by other scholars about the career and biography of Ibn Tūmart. Most recently, and perhaps at an extreme, Maribel Fierro has suggested that 'Ibn Tūmart's encounter with al-Ghazālī is apocryphal,' adding that 'In my opinion, there was no meeting between the two (if ever Ibn Tūmart was in the east),' and she suggests that even the visit to al-Andalus by Ibn Tūmart which we hear about 'is also a fiction' whose purpose is merely to enable Ibn Tūmart to know what was going on in al-Andalus and thus to be able to tell al-Ghazālī about the burning of his books there.[30] We may note the concern of Ibn Tūmart in Ibn al-Qaṭṭān's version of the story with two principal issues, the

obligation to offer prayer at the appropriate times and the prohibition on the drinking of wine, and remember how important these two issues were in the elaboration of the Almohad doctrine.[31] Remembering that, we may wonder how convenient it was that the life of the founder should have happened to provide this example of his concern with just these two issues on his trip home – if it did. The hint that Maribel Fierro gives, of her doubt about Ibn Tūmart's very visit to the East, seems to call for support; to the extent that it weakens the credibility of one link in the chain of what is reported about Ibn Tūmart before his arrival in the West, and that it does so by improving our understanding of the presence of literary and folkloric elements in its make-up, what is argued here seems to offer such support.

Conclusion

Other conclusions can be drawn from this small collection of textual fragments. First, we note the importance for this analysis of the text of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān. Discovered and published long after the other principal texts, it is the fullest of our sources. It is also the only version of the story which contains enough of the material enabling us to identify the story of Ibn Tūmart on board the ship as folkloric and, hence, as almost certainly apocryphal. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān was active a century or more after the date of Ibn Tūmart's alleged trip from Alexandria to the West. We cannot, at least as yet, know what his source was, or its date; but it was clearly a source with a pro-Almohad bias, and that fact argues for an earlier rather than a later date. This should remind us of how careful we need to be in using biographical material in our sources, especially regarding a holy or saintly person.[32] All too often it can be whittled down in the natural process of textual or other borrowing which is so common a feature of medieval Arabic literature until it becomes just a simple statement, such as we have above, in Ibn Abī Zarʿ, al-Nuwayrī, Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Qunfudh, to the effect that so-and-so went from East to West. It may be that the statement reflects a truth, but we cannot know, and these statements cannot be cited as reliable testimony. We cannot show that he did not

make such a journey, but in the same degree the present example demonstrates that what looks in these writers at first sight to be sober evidence that he did can easily turn out to be nothing of the kind.

Secondly, this case demonstrates the value of folklore studies, or how useful it is to pay attention to the literary character of the material which we find in our sources. Once free of the thickets of the first couple of centuries, many students of the Islamic past suffer from a not unnatural tendency to believe what is reported in our sources, unless it is obviously unacceptable. There is nothing inherently unacceptable about a man like Ibn Tūmart wishing to enforce Islamic norms about prayer and wine-drinking on board a ship going from East to West. But this truth does not of itself confer truthful status on an account of Ibn Tūmart actually doing so.

Thirdly, and related to the previous point, this case highlights the importance of the potential contribution of Arabic-Islamic civilization to the study of folklore. We have a number of studies of folklore in the Arabic-Islamic context, but collected oral material from the Arab world has still not been published very much, while published literary sources have not been studied enough from this point of view.[33] What this example shows is the survival of older Mediterranean and Near Eastern folklore traditions, possibly of oral type, in the written tradition of Islam.[34]

Notes

1. See already Ambrosio Huici, 'La leyenda y la historia en los orígenes del imperio Almohade,' *Al-Andalus,* 14 (1949), pp.339–376, especially p.346, where he refers to the passages from the *Mu'jib* and Ibn al-Qaṭṭān cited below, but without drawing any conclusions from them.

2. Huici mentions this, but he does not seem to make sufficient allowance for the survival of material from inside the tradition. See also, on this point, I. Goldziher's lengthy introduction to the edition of *Le Livre d'Ibn Toumert* (Algiers, 1903), passim, and in particular his reference (pp.101–102) to Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAbbāsī, author of *Āthār al-uwal fi tartīb al-duwal* (Cairo, 1305/1887–88) on the margin of al-Suyūṭī's *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*. Writing in 708/1308, this writer is full of

admiration for Ibn Tūmart, but retains nothing of the hagiographical tradition. While preparing this article, I was able to use Goldziher's own copy of this rare work in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

3. See, e.g., Madeleine Fletcher, 'Ibn Tūmart's Teachers: The Relationship with al-Ghazālī,' *al-Qanṭara*, 18 (1997), pp.305–330, especially at pp.305–306, referring to earlier studies.

4. For the difficulties involved in establishing the chronology of Ibn Tūmart's travels and studies (to the extent that these really happened at all), see Fletcher, 'Ibn Tūmart's Teachers.' See also Rachid Bourouiba, 'A propos de la date de naissance d'Ibn Tūmart,' *Revue d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghreb* (January, 1966), pp.19–25, and his 'Chronologie d'Ibn Tūmart,' *Revue d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghreb* (July 1967), pp.39–47.

5. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* (Beirut, 1398/1978), vol.8, p.294.

6. This passage occurs in Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut, n.d.), vol.5, pp.45–55, no.688, at 45–46; I cite here from de Slane's translation, with minor modifications.

7. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *Muʿjib*, ed. R.P.A. Dozy as *The History of the Almohades* (2nd ed. Leiden, 1881), p.129 (of Arabic text).

8. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* (Cairo, n.d.), vol.2, p.49; I quote from the translation of de Slane (Paris, 1868), vol.3, pp.206–207, with some very slight alterations.

9. E. Lévi-Provençal, 'Textes arabes relatifs à l'histoire du Maroc. Six fragments inédits d'une Chronique anonyme du début des Almohades, publiés, traduits et annotés,' in *Mélanges René Basset* (Paris, 1923–25), vol.2, pp.335–393. The passage of interest here appears on pp.346–347; Makkī's text shows a couple of small differences, of no significance here, from that published by Lévi-Provençal.

10. Emile Fricaud, 'La notice biographique d'Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn al-Qaṭṭān dans *l'Ad-Dayl wa-t-Takmila* d'Ibn ʿAbd-al-Malik al-Marrākušī,' in María Luisa Ávila and Maribel Fierro, ed. *Biografías Almohades* (Madrid and Granada, 2000), vol.2, pp.223–283.

11. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Naẓm al-jumān*, ed. M.ʿA. Makkī (Rabat, n.d. [1964]), pp.39–40.

12. The reference here is presumably to Ibn Tūmart, but the grammar would permit a reference to 'the owner of the wine.'

13. I cite this via A. Beaumier's French translation, *Roudh el-Kartas, Histoire des souverains du Maghreb (Espagne et Maroc) et annales de la ville de Fès* (Paris, 1860), p.243.

14. Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ahwānī (Cairo, 1403/1983), vol.24, pp.277–278.

15. Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale*, tr. W. MacGuckin de Slane (Paris, 1927), vol.2, p.164. Note the bareness of this report; it is all the more striking since we know (p.162) that Ibn Khaldūn was acquainted with the work of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān.

16. Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Khaṭīb Ibn al-Qunfudh al-Qusanṭīnī, *al-Fārisiyya fī mabādi' al-dawla al-Ḥafṣiyya*, ed. Muḥammad al-Shādhilī al-Nifār and ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Turkī (Tunis, 1968), p.100.

17. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Copenhagen and Bloomington, 1955–1958), vol.5, p.320, no.S264.1. In Antti Aarne's *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* (FF Communications No.3) translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson (FF Comunications No.74) (Helsinki, 1928), this type is listed among 'Types not included,' because of its 'lack of general distribution' or because it has 'not seemed to constitute a true folk-tale type.' I have not seen the second edition of this latter work, but the variety of the material cited in the *Motif-Index* three decades after the first publication of Aarne's work seems to confirm the generality of the distribution. And as to the folk-tale character, the type of the stories in that material seems to explain why Thompson did list it in the *Index*.

18. Given the relevance of the Islamic context, it should be noted that these do not seem to have any direct relation to our story here; see also Hasan M. El-Shamy, *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995), vol.1, p.338, no.S264.1. The additions to Thompson here are all from the oral tradition.

19. See now Jack M. Sasson, *Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary and Interpretation* (New York, 1990), especially pp.16–17.

20. I propose to look at these in a separate study. The absence of such materials from Thompson's work is of course not a matter of carelessness; that collection does not aim to deal with these traditions.

21. I quote from A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford, 1964).

22. Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī al-Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' al-musammā ʿArā'is al-majālis* (Cairo, 1356/1937), p.346. I cite only the relevant parts of the text (my translation). See now also A. Rippin, 'al-Thaʿlabī,' *EI2*, vol.10, p.435.

23. Note here the direct contrast to what the Biblical version has.

24. For al-Ubulla see Ibn ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Ḥimyarī, *Kitāb al-rawḍ al-miʿṭār fī khabar al-aqṭār*, ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1975), pp.8–9; and J.H.

Kramers, 'al-Ubulla,' *EI2*, vol.10, pp.765–766. Ubulla is the name both of a town on the right bank of the Tigris in Iraq and of a canal which was the main waterway from Basra southeastwards to the Tigris and further on to the sea. The length of the canal is usually given as four *farsakh*s.

25. The introduction of a third fish is odd; it also makes it even more difficult to understand how God's thinning of the skin of one fish could enable Jonah to 'see everything that was in the sea.' But perhaps this is too literalistic a reading.

26. The attribution of this text to al-Kisā'ī is not without problems. See T. Nagel, 'al-Kisā'ī,' *EI2*, vol.5, p.176, also reporting that the earliest manuscripts of this work go back to the 7th/13th century. I cite this, with very minor modifications, from *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa'i*, tr. with notes, W.M. Thackston, Jr. (Boston, 1978), pp.323–324 (the material on Jonah here is dependent, we are told, on Ka'b al-Aḥbār). See also Boaz Shoshan, 'High Culture and Popular Culture in Medieval Islam,' *Studia Islamica*, 73 (1991), pp.67–107, referring especially to J. Pauliny (p.85), who suggests a date in the 4th-6th/10–12th centuries as most probable.

27. Note the pronounced similarity to the procedure of the medieval Christian European witch ordeal.

28. To the Mediterranean – from where? And what is the Coral Castle?

29. Note here the canonical number forty, as well as the Biblical number three.

30. Maribel Fierro, 'The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*,' *JIS*, 10 (1999), pp.226–248, esp. pp.229–230 and n.14.

31. Cf. Robert Brunschvig, 'Sur la doctrine du Mahdī Ibn Tūmart,' *Arabica*, 2 (1955), pp.137–149, esp. at pp.138–139.

32. For an extensive treatment of what is basically a similar problem, see now, for the biography of Ibn Ḥanbal, Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Hanbalism: Piety into Power* (Richmond, Surrey, 2002). I am grateful to the author for permitting me to see this in advance of publication.

33. El-Shamy (supra, n.18) uses both oral and written materials, but the oral material is largely unpublished, and in the collections in Bloomington.

34. I am grateful to C. Adang, F. Daftary, V. McKernan and M. Shefer for help in the preparation of this paper.

13

Meadow of the Martyrs: Kāshifī's Persianization of the Shiʿi Martyrdom Narrative in the Late Tīmūrid Herat

Abbas Amanat

In the vast Shiʿi literature commemorating the martyrs of Karbalā', few texts have been as influential as Ḥusayn Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī's *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* (Meadow of the Martyrs).[1] The Shiʿi biographer, Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī, writing in the 13th/19th century, considers the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* 'as the first book to be written in a fashion distinct by its order and lavish style and in such admirable method.' So successful was this early 10th/16th-century book of martyrs that the 'narrators of the sufferings' of Karbalā', who often recited it verbatim, came to be known in Iran as *rawḍa-khwān* (reciters of the *Rawḍa*).'[2] Beyond the melodic recitation over the pulpit, the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* was highly influential in the development of the Shiʿi passion play (*taʿziya*) and the mourning verses (*nawḥa*) of the Muḥarram procession.[3] It is not an exaggeration to suggest that no other medium like *rawḍa-khwānī* and *taʿziya* has helped so much in the shaping of popular Shiʿism, not only in Iran but in Shiʿi India, southern Lebanon and elsewhere. The enduring memory of recitation and performance of the tragedies

can be seen in every instance of the Safawid and post-Safawid Iran; and even as late as the Islamic Revolution.[4]

Despite its profound impact there has been little study of the *rawḍa* tradition, and even less about Kāshifī's work. This is all the more remarkable because *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* was produced in a seemingly Sunni environment and in a crucial historical juncture coinciding with the rise of the Safawid dynasty and the establishment of Shi'ism as the official creed of the newly-founded state. This coincidence lends itself to intriguing questions. The circumstances leading to the production of the book are as relevant as the author's religious loyalty and possible political motives behind his Tīmūrid patron. In presentation and style, and in characterization of heroes and villains of the upheaval of Karbalā', the book's main theme, we may detect a subtle subtext; one which corresponds to the rapidly shifting political realities of Kāshifī's time. The *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* thus may be read not only as an allusive commentary on the sinking fortunes of Tīmūrid rule but perhaps as a means of forging new political bonds by appealing to dormant Shi'i sentiments. This was at a time when Kāshifī's princely patron had moved closer to a pro-Shi'i position, perhaps in response to the impending Uzbek threat, which had already reached behind the walls of Herat. Playing on the old narrative of Shi'i martyrdom and relying on his remarkable preaching and performing skills, Kāshifī transformed the Arabic *maqātil* narrative into a Persian drama of vividness and emotional impact.[5] Punctuated by apt poetic references and employing Persian musical scales, Kāshifī as the author/performer shrewdly played on the collective grief of his growing audiences. Some contemporary sources consider him a suspect Shi'i not only because of his Shi'i background but also for intense expressions of sentiments for the House of 'Alī in his sermons. Yet, his ancestral Shi'i creed allowed him to practise dissimulation (*taqiyya*), a religious license necessary for negotiating his identity in a cosmopolitan climate such as Herat.[6]

From Periphery to Cosmopolitan Herat

Born around 840/1436 in Sabzawār, a stronghold of Twelver

Shiʿism in Khurāsān, Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Sabzawārī, better known as Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī, was son of a local Shiʿi preacher. Even by the time of his childhood the memory of the Shiʿi Sarbadārī rule in Sabzawār and Nīsābūr (737–808/1335–1405) was not entirely faded. Only a generation earlier, the Sarbadārī leader, Sulṭān ʿAlī Khwāja Masʿūd, was captured by Tīmūrid forces and executed in Herat after his failed uprising in 808/1405 in Sabzawār. Two decades earlier, Najm al-Dīn ʿAlī Muʾayyad, the last effective Sarbadārī leader, had died after 27 years of rule over the Bayhaq province. He had accepted Tīmūr's suzerainty, quashed the messianic dervish wing within the Sarbadārī movement and promoted a ritualized orthodox Twelver Shiʿism interlaced with the Karbalāʾ eulogies.[7]

This Sarbadārī legacy is likely to have inspired Kāshifī and influenced the rendering of *Rawḍat al-shuhadāʾ* both in style and substance. As early as the middle of the 8th/14th century the Sarbadārī ruler, Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Yaḥyā Kurābī (753–759/1352–1357), commissioned Persian works by Shiʿi writers on sufferings of the Imams.[8] Among many works of Kāshifī himself, one can also consider *Futuwwat-nāma-yi Sulṭānī* as an effort to commemorate the Sarbadārī age. This extensive account of the chivalrous traditions and rituals of the *futuwwa* brotherhood was promoted by the Sarbadārīs whose leadership was closely associated with the urban guilds and their *futuwwa* network. Parallel to *Rawḍat al-shuhadāʾ*, Kāshifī's objective in *Futuwwat-nāma* is to introduce the popular Shiʿi-Sufi legacy of his homeland into the diverse cultural environment of Herat.[9] The very dedication of this work to the eighth Twelver Shiʿi Imam, ʿAlī b. Musā al-Riḍā, who is identified in the preface as the 'king of the saints' (*sulṭān al-awliyāʾ*), verifies Kāshifī's Shiʿi-Sufi affiliations.[10]

The dedication of this work may not be unrelated to Kāshifī's brief period of study in Mashhad, the shrine of the eighth Imam, before departing for Herat. The chain of 'reporters of the *ḥadīth*' to which Kāshifī was affiliated went back through his father all the way to the eighth Imam himself.[11] Yet, Shiʿi affiliation did not hamper the young Kāshifī to seek patronage in a predominantly Sunni Herat. In 860/1455 in a dream he saw himself stepping

out of the shrine of the eighth Imam in Mashhad only to be encountered by a saintly figure clad in white who introduced himself as Shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn Kāshgharī, the renowned successor to Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshbandī. The Shaykh invites Kāshifī to join his Sufi order but without specifying the location. In search of the Shaykh in the world of reality, Kāshifī then abandons his studies in Mashhad and heads for Herat only to realize that Kāshgharī of his dream had died shortly before his arrival.[12]

Kāshifī's dream, most likely apocryphal, can be taken as a revealing symbol of his shift from the parochial Shi'i world of his hometown to a promising Sunni Tīmūrid capital. He managed this shift through the medium of Sufism. Shortly after his arrival, he became associated with the circle of Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (817–898/ 1414–1492), the celebrated master Sufi, poet, scholar and teacher of the 9th/15th century and a former disciple of Kāshgharī. His marriage to Jāmī's sister fortified affiliation with the influential master and paved Kāshifī's way toward a successful public career and prolific authorship. Yet, even in the guise of a Naqshbandī Sufi, Kāshifī was never fully shielded from the charges of harbouring Shi'i loyalties. Nor did he seem to have escaped the blame of his own countrymen. When years later he was appointed as the chief judge of the district of Bayhaq, for which Sabzawār was the centre, he was not immune to the charges of betraying his Shi'i heritage by the local population. Predictably, his career as a judge did not last long and he returned to the bustle of Herat where he could better maintain a liminal identity.[13] A later Shi'i biographer, Qāḍī Nūrallāh Shūshtarī, assigns the subtle blame of 'worldly expediency' (*maṣāliḥ-i dunyā-dārī*) as Kāshifī's motive for abandoning his real Shi'i identity.[14]

Yet, Herat of the late 9th/15th century was not devoid of pro-Shi'i sentiments. Most Sufi orders revered the House of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) and recognized 'Alī as a patriarchal saint. The passion of Ḥusayn also served as a powerful sacrifice paradigm across communal and sectarian loyalties. It is not therefore unlikely that the ranks of the 'preferential Sunnis' (*Sunniyān-i tafḍīlī*), as the sympathizers of the house of 'Alī among the Sunnis were known, included such notables as Jāmī and other Naqshbandī

luminaries. In his poetry and prose Jāmī praised ʿAlī and his sacred progeny and lamented in passing the tragedy of Karbalā', though without ever denying the legitimacy of the four 'Rightly Guided' caliphs.[15] The last effective ruler of Herat, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (875–911/1470–1506), and some in the members of the Tīmūrid royal family, also harboured Shiʿi sympathies. Kāshifī's *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, after all, was commissioned by Bāyqarā's son-in-law, Sayyid ʿAbdallāh Mīrzā, also known as Sayyid Mīrzā.[16] Such was the attitude of many Herat notables even though Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Nawā'ī (844–906/1441–1501), the most influential statesman, patron and literary figure of the late Tīmūrid period, stood out for his strong Sunni proclivities.

ʿAlī Shīr Nawā'ī's concern for the growth of Shiʿism was more likely occasioned by the rising Shiʿi-Sufi activism and especially the success of pro-Safawi propaganda in the eastern Tīmūrid lands. Earlier on, the proto-messianic teachings of the Shāh Qāsim Anwār (757–837/1356–1433), a Sufi poet and propagandist, had caused anxiety among the Tīmūrid authorities. Anwār promoted the cause of the lords of Ardabīl six decades before the rise of the Safawid dynasty. As part of the 9th/15th-century Shiʿi symbiosis, Anwār's message struck a sympathetic cord not only with the wandering dervishes and the general public, but seemingly with Tīmūrid princes and patricians. His popular preaching, no doubt, was the cause of his expulsion from Herat in 830/1426. These measures, however, did not diminish support for Shiʿism. From the very end of the 9th/15th century, throughout the Persian-Islamic world, from Kāshghar, Delhi, Samarqand and Herat to Shīrāz, Tabrīz and Brūsā, the prospects for the Persianized Sufi-Shiʿi orders, often with subversive agendas, were in rising. This was at a time when the days of the Tīmūrids of Khurāsān were numbered.[17] Kāshifī's measured crypto-Shiʿi sermons in the praise of the House of ʿAlī and on the martyrdom of Ḥusayn appealed to Sufi-Shiʿi sentiments without posing a threat to the Tīmūrid establishment.

The Crumbling World of Tīmūrid Herat

The real threat to Tīmūrid rule, however, came not from Shiʿi-

Sufi orders but from the rising Sunni Uzbek nomadic power of the Central Asian steppes. In his biography of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Nawā'ī, the celebrated Tīmūrid historian, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khwānd Mīr, offers a fascinating case of the growing anxieties of the Herat elite in the face of the rising Uzbek threat. In Muḥarram 906/July 1500 the survival of the Tīmūrid state was so much at stake that even after Nawā'ī eventually acquired Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's permission for a *ḥajj* pilgrimage, the notables of the city pleaded with him to once more cancel his journey. Kāshifī was among the notables of the Herat who argued that:

> The reason for the stability of the cities of Khurāsān and the tranquility of their peoples is your benevolent presence. Now that this land is devoid of the residence of the auspicious Sulṭān [who was campaigning against the Uzbeks], if your light-emitting presence also departs, it is possible that many troubles (*fitanuhā*) occur which cannot be conceivably mastered. Particularly since the king of the Uzbeks, who has gained mastery over Māwarā' al-Nahr (Transoxiana), is aiming to cross Āmūya (Āmū Daryā or Oxus) River. Now that Iraq and Shām are also in the state of utmost anarchy, and roads are extremely unsafe, according to the dictates of the noble *sharīʿa* the *ḥajj* pilgrimage is not obligatory. Our humble appeal is that once again you spare the souls of the people of Khurāsān and cancel your journey since your stay this year equals the reward of seventy *ḥajj* pilgrimages on foot.[18]

Out of concern for the 'welfare of the people,' Nawā'ī complied with the request. He did not live long enough however to undertake his pilgrimage. His death a year later in 906/1501 was a blow to Tīmūrid rule and the beginning of a period of unrest that plunged Herat into a decade of tumultuous upheavals. In 905/1499 the Uzbek chief, Budāq Khān, had already defeated Ḥusayn Bāyqarā in Balkh. Two years later in 907/1501 his son, Muḥammad Khān, better known as Shaybak Khān, consolidated the Shaybānid control over Samarqand, hence effectively ending the fragile Tīmūrid presence beyond Oxus. The loss of the Tīmūrid old capital to the conquering Uzbeks, which was followed by the flight of Tīmūrid princes to Khurāsān, was viewed in Herat with horror. Driven out of his ancestral home, Bābur Mīrzā (the future

founder of the Mughal empire of India) captured Kābul in 909/1503 and soon after entered into an alliance with Ḥusayn Bāyqarā in Herat against their common Uzbek enemy. But three years later in 911/1506, the death of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā sealed the fate of the Tīmūrid dynasty. In Muḥarram 912/May 1506, Shaybak Khān captured Herat and after crushing the little resistance offered by the late Sulṭān's two sons, he extended Shaybānid control over the rest of Khurāsān. The Uzbeks' Mongol ancestry, which brought back memories of past brutalities, and their vigorously-enforced Sunni orthodoxy were not welcomed by the Herat elite who were accustomed to the refinements of a vibrant cultural life with its subtle complexities.[19]

It was within this critical time in 908/1502 that Kāshifī composed his *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, just two years before his death in 910/1504.[20] The symmetry between the course of events and the subject matter of Kāshifī's book cannot be entirely coincidental. This is all the more remarkable because soon after Sunnism was imposed over Herat by the Uzbek conqueror, the city was captured by an even more zealous Shi'i conqueror. In 916/1510 Shāh Ismā'īl I (907–930/1501–1524) defeated the Uzbeks in the battle of Marw, in the course of which Shaybak Khān was killed. In the same year Ismā'īl captured Herat, the greatest prize of his Khurāsān campaign. Following the Tīmūrid model, Herat became the eastern capital of the newly-founded Safawid empire. The capture of the city by a Shi'i messianic king came only eight years after the composition of the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, a Shi'i narrative commemorating the tragedies of Karbalā'.[21]

It is quite conceivable that by 908/1502, a year after Ismā'īl's conquest of Tabrīz and proclamation of Ithnā'asharī Shi'ism as the state creed, Kāshifī and the pro-Shi'i Herat elite were already aware of the decisive events in western Iran.[22] It is plausible that at this brief juncture before the Uzbek invasion, the above-mentioned Tīmūrid prince Sayyid 'Abdallāh Mīrzā, felt necessary to patronize Kāshifī's work in order to honour the memory of his own Shi'i descent. By doing so the prince may have intended to enhance his prospects for succession shortly before Bāyqarā's death and at a time when mobilizing the public through a Shi'i

message was in vogue. That Kāshifī's book meant to enhance Sayyid Mīrzā's stature among the patricians of Herat is evident in the epilogue to the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*. In his preface Kāshifī praises the prince for his dual noble descent. He admires him for high rank in the royal lineage, but more importantly, for being of a noble descent through the House of the Prophet (*'uluw-i nasab dar siyādat*). Sayyid 'Abdallāh Mīrzā, who was married to Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's daughter, Maryam Sulṭān Baygum, was a nephew of the Tīmūrid ruler and an influential figure in Herat politics. Kāshifī traces the prince's paternal genealogy in the Ḥasanid line back to Ḥasan b. 'Alī (d.49/669), the second Shi'i Imam, while tracing the prince's maternal ancestry to the Sayyids of the Ḥusaynid line. To complete the prince's noble position, he then traces Sayyid Mīrzā's maternal Tīmūrid genealogy to Tīmūr himself.[23] As such, *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* served the purpose of glorifying the political ambitions of a Tīmūrid prince and enhancing his status among the pro-Shi'i public.

Sayyid Mīrzā's career, to the extent that it is known, only confirms such a political programme in the final days of Tīmūrid rule. During the internecine rivalries toward the end of Bāyqarā's rule and immediately after his death, which eventually brought about the Tīmūrid collapse, Sayyid Mīrzā may have underscored his own Shi'i lineage in order to secure support among the urban population of Herat. In 906/1500 he had fought for the defence of Herat against prince Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā, the eldest son of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, who had rebelled against his father. Defeated in battle, Sayyid Mīrzā had taken refuge in Bāyqarā's camp. Later in 911/1506, in the wake of Bāyqarā's death, his ambitions for power seem to have revived. Though he was obliged under pressure from Tīmūrid royal women, including his own wife, to pay his allegiance to Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā, he did not seem to have actually succumbed to the prince's ephemeral reign. In the last days of Tīmūrid rule, however, Sayyid Mīrzā changed his mind. He escaped before the Uzbek armies in Herat and joined in Mashhad the forces of the same Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā. The desperate resistance against the Uzbek army ended in total defeat. Yet shortly after, Sayyid Mīrzā took part in another desperate counter-offensive,

this time in the city of Sabzawār, where he must have relied on the sympathies of the Shiʿi population. There, he was killed in battle in 913/1507.[24]

Remaking of a Martyrdom Narrative

The final composition of *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, we may thus safely assume, was facilitated by the patronage of a prince who pursued a political end. Yet it is very likely that its content, and even organization, was long-rehearsed during the sermons delivered in the month of Muḥarram. Khwānd Mīr, who provides us with Kāshifī's weekly preaching schedule, specifies his Friday morning sermons from the pulpit of Herat's Dār al-Siyāda-i Sulṭānī (the royal hall of the *sayyids*).[25] Afterwards, Kāshifī would lead the congregational prayers in the Herat Friday Mosque. His busy schedule also included Tuesdays' preachings in the Sulṭānī Madrasa and Wednesdays' in a Sufi shrine. This diverse lecturing and preaching may very well underline not only Kāshifī's popularity, as Khwānd Mīr insinuates, but his ecumenical appeal to mainstream Sunnis, as well as Sufi and Shiʿi sympathizers. Large segments of these sermons, delivered on the pulpit in front of large congregations, were to appear in his copious works ranging from his popular commentary on the Qur'an, *Mawāḥib-i ʿāllīya* (The Blessings of the Sublime) to the more mystically inclined commentary, *Jawāhir al-tafsīr* (The Jewel of the Commentaries).

Kāshifī's broad appeal is also evident in his vast scope which made him something of a 'universal man,' and almost unique in the Persian literary world of the late medieval period. A great popularizing author, he was conscious to utilize all the potentials of a dramatic language to reach his Persian-speaking audiences. His objective in the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* was to produce, according to the wishes of his patron, a readable Persian account that superseded the existing narratives in comprehensiveness and accessibility. Kāshifī has shown, to the delight of his vast readership over many centuries, his great expertise in rendering, revising, compiling and popularizing a wide range of Persian classical texts.[26]

The rationale for the production of a Shi'i popular narrative however, becomes more apparent if we look at similar Sunni hagiographies about the Prophet and the early Caliphs, accounts that Kāshifī apparently aimed to emulate, incorporate and even supersede. It is possible that he organized his book, and even chose its title, in conjunction with the work of a contemporary Persian preacher in Herat, Jamāl al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Allāh Dashtakī Shīrāzī, better known as Jamāl Ḥusaynī (d.927/1521).[27] An influential minister and later chief of the city's nobles, he came to play a part in the transitory period between the fall of the Tīmūrids and the Safawid conquest of Herat.[28] His popular hagiography in Persian, *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb fī sīrat al-nabī wa'l-āl wa'l-aṣḥāb* (the Meadow of Friends on the Biography of the Prophet, the People of the House and the Companions) was commissioned by 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī in 888/1483, but was later revised and completed in 903/1497. It consists of three parts in a typical Sunni format, covering biographies of the Prophet, the Companions (*aṣḥāb*), the adherents (*tābi'īn*) and the early transmitters of *ḥadīth*.[29] Frequently in the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, Kāshifī quotes Jamāl Ḥusaynī, highlighting the prevailing 'Alid sentiments in Sunni *ḥadīth* sources.

Production of texts of resembling themes and titles by two celebrated preachers of Herat may not be a coincidence. It is likely that Nawā'ī's death reduced the Tīmūrid enthusiasm for official Sunnism and opened the way for open expressions of Shi'i sentiments. Such a shift obviously included the writing of the already well-developed oral repertoire of Karbalā', an essential component of a Shi'i collective identity. The rise of a new Shi'i state in western Iran, hence, may have promoted the cult of Ḥusayn as a mobilizing strategy against the imminent Uzbek threat. Admittedly, there is no explicit evidence to suggest any ideological urgency for the production of Kāshifī's account. Yet unmistakably, there is an air of confidence in his unfettered Shi'i presentation of the story of the House of 'Alī, and especially the account of Ḥusayn's martyrdom and the lives of the Twelve Imams and their descendants, which suggests a regained boldness in uncovering Shi'ism as a communal memory.

Competing for a larger audience, Kāshifī possessed performing

techniques suitable to such an appeal. He no doubt must have mastered them in his Shiʿi homeland. A seasoned preacher known for his good voice and for mastery of the classical Persian musical modes, he employed them both in his recitations of Karbalā' sufferings. His prose was frequently interlaced with vivid verses, which were either borrowed from classical and contemporary poets, or were Kāshifī's own. Following an old Shiʿi tradition, Kāshifī insists on the effectiveness of the Karbalā' narrative to induce tears. He assures his reader that 'whoever sheds tears for Ḥusayn, or [even] makes himself weep, he is bound to enter Paradise.'[30] Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Nawā'ī, who praises Kāshifī as an unequalled preacher, cares to emphasize his extraordinary popularity. During his sermons, 'no matter how spacious a place, there is such a huge crowd that most people cannot find seats. At times the crowd was so dense that people were in the danger of being trampled over.' The chief reason for his appeal, Nawā'ī observes, was that Kāshifī's 'voice and presentation (*ṣawt va inshā'*) were extremely melodious and tender. In truth, the voice of David, peace be upon him, has emanated in him. Throughout the Muḥammadan community there is not a single person equalled to his perfect Davidian quality.'[31] Such a strong endorsement was, of course, qualified by casting some doubt on Kāshifī's adherence to Sunnism. He is from Sabzawār, Nawā'ī consented, 'but he is clear of their [Shiʿi] heresy (*rafḍ*) and free of their false creed, although he is not free of such an accusation.'[32] A subtle qualifier like this one from a great statesman with strict Sunni beliefs seemed to have been necessary so as to eliminate any guilt by association.

Kāshifī's sermons surely brought accusation of Shiʿi heresy. It has been said that on one occasion in Herat someone in the audience, who routinely lampooned his sermons, handed him a note with this famous verse from Ḥāfiẓ: 'Preachers who shine in the [prayer] niche and on the pulpit, once in private, they engage in that other act.'[33] Kāshifī reportedly was so incensed that for two months he stopped preaching.[34] Ironically, not only lampooners in his Sunni audience troubled Kāshifī but his own Shiʿi countrymen of Sabzawār were not convinced of his Shiʿi loyalties. The staunch Shiʿi author, Qāḍī Nūrallāh Shūshtarī, who pities Kāshifī

for being 'condemned to the painful companionship' of ʿAlī Shīr Nawā'ī and for being 'trapped' into becoming Jāmī's 'brother-in-law,' relates an anecdote demonstrative of the level of Shiʿi suspicion of Kāshifī's sincerity.[35] Sentiments such as these, however, did not seem to have dampened public enthusiasm for his sermons or diminished patronage including that of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr himself.

Kāshifī's much-appreciated art of narration, as witnessed by his contemporaries, was not confined to his oratorical skills. It was Kāshifī's *Anwār-i suhaylī* that was destined to become one of the most widely read Persian prose works before the 20th century,[36] only second, perhaps, to Saʿdī's *Gulistān* (which is the product of another successful *wāʿiẓ*). Not surprisingly, works of Kāshifī exerted a lasting influence on Persian popular culture largely because they struck powerful emotional and moral chords. His use of a discursive style in an accessible language was polished by many years of experience and practice. His mastery of Persian narrative prose is perhaps best demonstrated in the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*. Here, we witness the emergence of a new genre of Persian prose that aims to break the strictures of formal secretarial or theological styles. Contrary to the ornate literary prose of the Tīmūrid period and tedious digressions of much of historical writing of his time, and contrary to consciously Arabized prose of the jurists and theologians (if they ever wrote in Persian), Kāshifī's narrative almost deliberately simulates the spoken Persian of his time. It is direct, easy to comprehend, intimate and emotional, and it is garnished with frequent poetic references. Its passionate, almost sentimental tone is designed to play on the melancholic mood of its audience during the month of Muḥarram and bring tears to their eyes. Its frequent references to historical sources, on the other hand, is meant to generate authenticity and trust. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that in its scope and emotional impact, *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* supersedes earlier Shiʿi eulogies in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, above all because it successfully managed to construct a tragedy almost in the classical sense.[37]

On the events of Karbalā', for example, Kāshifī points out that 'in most treatises that deal with this tragedy, the details of the

struggles of Ḥusayn and his companions are not recorded.' The earlier sources often 'sufficed mentioning a name and a verse.' Kāshifī claims that he 'carried out extensive investigation and research in order to report in these pages the details of this upheaval in the best of styles.' He further states that he has omitted especially the Arabic battle poems (*rajaz*) which were of no benefit to the Persian-speaking audience so as to avoid the break in the flow of the story. Instead he added Persian verses suitable for the occasion.[38] Yet we know that a vast portion of the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* is reconstructed by the author, either based on the existing legends or figments of Kāshifī's own imagination. In this respect he elevated the much-appreciated art of storytelling into a new plane. Most notably, on the account of the martyrs of Karbalā' and especially Ḥusayn and his relatives, we witness the emergence of the genre of historical novel. More purposefully than any historical text, this medium was able to arouse emotions and carry the message of mourning and lamentation to it audience.

Though essentially a historical drama, *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* utilizes an array of Arabic and Persian sources ranging from hagiographies and eulogies to general histories, biographical dictionaries, collections of *ḥadīth* and Qur'anic commentaries, as well as poetry, didactics and Sufi aphorism which are quoted at every instance with scholarly caution so as to avoid charges of sectarian propaganda. Among its frequently quoted sources is 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *Shawāhid al-nubuwwa li-taqwiyat ahl al-futuwwa* (Signs of Prophecy in Support of the [Sufi] Brethren). In this mystical account of the life of the Prophet, Jāmī cites miraculous dreams and visions of the Prophet forecasting the martyrdom of his grandson, Ḥusayn. A chapter on the 'consequent punishments of the enemies' (*'uqūbāt-i a'dā*), on the other hand, anticipates the fate of the killers of Ḥusayn in this world and the next. Kāshifī's frequent citing of this source reveals his brother-in-law's mystical influence on him. It also underscores the author's strategy to safeguard against charges of deviation.[39] The above-mentioned Jamāl Ḥusaynī's *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* is another frequently-quoted source and perhaps for the same reasons of shielding the author against accusations. Likewise, Shi'i-cited sources, such as Shaykh Mufīd's

Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn and Ibn Bābūya's *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā,* were counterbalanced with Sunni canonical texts such as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's *Musnad* and al-Tirmidhī's *Sunan,* and with standard histories such as al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk.*[40] Yet invariably when he describes pivotal events of Karbalā' and the slaying of Ḥusayn and his relatives, Kāshifī is not shy of poetic license which is often highlighted by masterful rendering of the ambience.

On the occasion of ʿAlī Akbar's death on the day of *ʿĀshūrā',* Ḥusayn seeks him in the battlefield and once found mourns his loss:

> O, my beloved son where are you? Why no longer you can turn your lovely face toward your heartbroken father? My son, I am injured by the enemy's mischief. Yes, my heart's injury deserves the salt of parting.' Meanwhile Imam Ḥusayn's eyes fell on ʿAlī Akbar's horse but he did not find its rider. He followed the horse into the battlefield until it stopped at the spot where the Imam encountered his fallen son. Like a decapitated bird, he was throbbing unconsciously in blood and dust. The Imam immediately dismounted and sat beside his son laying his hand on his forehead. ʿAlī Akbar opened his eyes and saw his father's splendid countenance. He said: 'Do you see, father?' The Imam replied: 'See what my son?' He said: 'Here, look! This is my great grandfather, the Prophet. He holds in his hands two bowls of heavenly drink. He offers one to me. I ask: 'Give me the other one too because I am extremely thirsty.' He replies: ''Alī! Drink only this one; I have reserved the other one for your father. He too will join me with blistered lips and bloody heart.' Soon after ʿAlī Akbar uttered these words, he passed away. The Imam fastened his body on the horse and brought him to the camp where his mother and sisters began crying and serenading elegies. Alas, the shining new moon of the sky of *walāyat*, which has dawned from the horizon of the guiding imamate, eclipsed behind the veil of darkness before reaching its full light and high place in the sky; and the heavenly-like tree from the orchid of charity, which was grown on the bank of the river of courage and chivalry, was killed off by the windstorm of death before reaching its bloom and offering its fruits.[41]

The desire to render a Persian work accessible to the public aptly places Kāshifī in Herat's cultural landscape of the late 9th/

15th century. He states that 'at the outset of composing these pages it was resolved that no Arabic verses are to be included, unless necessary, since listening to these [verses] in the midst of [historical] reports will cause the Persian-speaking audience (*Fārsī-zabānān*) to lose concentration.'[42] Not an unusual concern for a popular preacher, his text is instead punctuated with Persian verse citations by Sanā'ī, 'Aṭṭār, Ḥāfiẓ, Sa'dī and some of Kāshifī's own. To maximize the emotional impact on the audience, these verses were to be recited melodically and with necessary theatrical intonations.

Moreover, the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* narrative was organized as a tragic cycle. Divided into ten chapters, corresponding to the first ten days of the month of Muḥarram, each chapter is designed to build up toward the climactic martyrdom of Ḥusayn on the tenth day, the day of *'Āshūrā'*. Chapters one to three portray prophetic sufferings, including Muḥammad's own, in the hands of his opponents, as an unavoidable consequence of any divine mission beginning with Adam. Chapters four to six describe the sufferings of the members of the Prophet's House: Fāṭima, 'Alī and their eldest son, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, the second Imam. Chapters seven to ten are on the life of Ḥusayn and the tragedy of Karbalā' and its consequences. This section is completed with short biographies of the twelve imams and their descendants. This structure holds together as a controlled dramatic narrative with a central plot, that is, the circumstances leading to the paradigmatic martyrdom of Ḥusayn and its redemptive underpinning. The protagonists (*awliyā'*, literally, 'friends') are 'Alī and his sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and his family, companions, helpers and sympathizers. The antagonists (*ashqiyā'*, literally, 'villains') are the ruling house of the Umayyads, most notably the usurper of the office of the caliphate, Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, followed by the governor of Kūfa, 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, and his agents, including Ḥusayn's murderer, Shimr, and the carrier of Ḥusayn's severed head to Damascus, Khūlī. It begins with a prologue on the sufferings of the prophets of the past and ends with an epilogue on the eschatological consequences of Ḥusayn's murder and the fates of his supporters and enemies.

Suffering, Kāshifī affirms, is the touchstone of human condition and God's love for those 'on whom He dispatches armies of suffering and grief,' an allusion, no doubt, to adherents to the Shi'i faith. Indeed, the very essence of humanity in the author's eyes is ingrained with grief, and the prophets are to be seen as the enduring epitomes of such pain. At the time of creation, by divine order, so does Kāshifī open his narrative, for 39 days the clouds arising from the sea of grief rained on the clay of Adam and only on the 40th day a few drops from the sea of happiness were sprinkled on that clay.[43] The theme of mankind's inherent grief, no doubt influenced by Jāmī's mystical hagiography, is followed up in the stories of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Zachary and John the Baptist (though, oddly enough, not Jesus) before recounting the sufferings of Muḥammad and his House.[44]

The account of Muḥammad's sufferings is particularly important, however, because Kāshifī aims to graft them into the sufferings of the holy family and especially to the tragedies of Karbalā'. This is a subtle strategy to blend Shi'i metahistory with the accepted Sufi narrative of the Prophet's life.[45] Repeatedly, the reader is reminded of Archangel Gabriel's revealed prophecy to Muḥammad that his beloved grandson, Ḥusayn, will be wronged by the enemies of his House and eventually martyred. Through dreams and visions, 'Alī and Fāṭima also grasp the same bitter reality about their son when he is still an infant, and they too lament his seemingly irrevocable fate. Upon his birth, we are told, Gabriel is revealed to Muḥammad to congratulate him and yet offer his condolences. The Archangel warns the Prophet, while he is playfully endearing his grandson: 'The throat that you kiss now will be slashed by the sabre of injustice.' When Fāṭima and 'Alī are informed of what fate has in store for their son, they too join the Prophet in weeping bitterly at the forthcoming tragedy. The holy parents and grandparent never question this irreversible destiny.[46]

In the manner of a true tragedy, the element of pity is largely assigned to a female figure, Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet. As much as Muḥammad and 'Alī exemplify submission to the divine will and forbearance in the face of trouble, Fāṭima epitomizes

motherly compassion. In one scene in the book, Fāṭima appears on the Day of Judgement carrying Ḥusayn's bloody shirt on her left shoulder, the poison-contaminated gown of her other son, Ḥasan, on her right shoulder, and the bloody turban of ʿAlī in her hands. She pleads with her father, Muḥammad, who is sitting on the pulpit, to redress the repeated injustices to her family. The Prophet, while fully sympathizing with her daughter, reminds her of his own task on the Last Day to intercede (*shifāʿa*) on behalf of the weak and the oppressed rather than to avenge. The blood of Ḥusayn and the martyrs of the House, the Prophet stresses, is an atonement to redeem the sins of all those Shiʿi believers who wept for the sufferings of the holy family.[47] Ḥusayn thus shares with the Prophet the eschatological function of serving on the Day of Judgement as intermediary (*wasīla*) for salvation of the believers.[48]

The above images of Fāṭima are among many scenes throughout the book engendering intimacy and empathy with the holy family. As a skilled preacher Kāshifī uses the digression device (*gurīz*, literally, 'escape') to switch to the tragedy of Karbalā' so as to sustain the attention of his audience and build up toward a final upheaval. At the heart of this discourse is a desire to share a tragic experience, whether with an individual reader, or more likely an audience listening to it (or eventually viewing it as a *taʿziya* play). The vivid imagery, depicted in a highly sentimental language and melodramatic tone, is intended to reinforce bonds of loyalty among the 'partisans' (*shīʿa*) of ʿAlī's House. Kāshifī embellishes a sentimental image of Fāṭima. As the daughter of Muḥammad, wife of ʿAlī and mother of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, her suffering was bound to arouse tremendous sympathy among his readers and listeners. The presence of an enthusiastic female audience must have encouraged Kāshifī in assigning to Fāṭima such a central role. Quoting the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, Kāshifī gives Fāṭima a special treatment as one of the five great weepers of history.[49] This is one of many reminders to the reader that weeping as a collective catharsis is a blessing with redemptive quality. It also underscores the role of Fāṭima as a paradigm of familial agony.[50]

Kāshifī's account of the People of the House (*ahl al-bayt*) is indeed saturated with agony. The fate of the sacred offspring,

Ḥusayn, in particular, has been dramatized through a prism of miracles, marvels, saintly visions, dreams and prophecies in order to impress upon the reader the mysteries of his preordained sacrifice. Like any other tragedy, here too, blind fate overshadows prudence, reason and reality. These elements admittedly are not missing from the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, but they are ultimately overridden by forces of destiny. The tension between the martyrdom myth and historical reality is well evident in Kāshifī's semi-historical account of Ḥusayn's life and the circumstances leading to Karbalā'. But more than being history in the modern sense, it is a rendition of the Shi'i collective memory. The Ḥusayn of the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* is deeply aware of his own impending end and of the triumph of the worldly villains. Despite tantalizing incentives to compromise and against the dictate of common sense, he too, similar to his older brother Ḥasan, who compromised with the Umayyads, succumbs to the dictates of his destiny. Yet he is portrayed as ultimately a human. He does not shy away from ambitions of power and at times is hostage to his own doubts and trepidations. He is not immune to indecision and fear, and ultimately fails to save his own family and companions, aspects which almost always are glossed over in Kāshifī's rendition with a lustre of saintly innocence. Yet by highlighting these human sentiments, Kāshifī aims to demonstrate the inefficacy of human will in reversing the forces of destiny. Ḥusayn's fall in the battle of Karbalā' is a dictate of the heavens over which neither he, nor his parents or the Prophet, or archangels have any control. On the way to Kūfa, for instance, he is repeatedly forewarned by his supporters of the great dangers lying ahead. But his response reiterates his grandfather's dream and his mother's anguish: that he will encounter the inevitable martyrdom because 'destiny cannot be defeated by sagacity' (*daf '-i taqdīr bi-tadbīr nashāyad kardan*).[51]

Ḥusayn's martyrdom on the day of '*Āshūrā'* (10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680) implies a symbolic meaning in the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* beyond its dramatic and redemptive contexts. In a broader scheme, Ḥusayn's fate, as repeatedly prophesized in the text, is to depict a Shi'i moral struggle of the righteous and the innocent against the overwhelming forces of evil and injustice.

Here, the martyr is not acting on his own volition, but as part of a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil, an overarching theme in Persian culture. It is as though in Kāshifī's rendering, the old Persian notion of time (*rūzgār, zamānih*), as the ultimate trickster, has been successfully grafted into the story of Karbalā' and Ḥusayn as its martyr-hero. We may wonder if this is Kāshifī's own device, or more likely, he is dramatizing and standardizing the existing narrative of Ḥusayn and Karbalā' inherent in the Shi'i past where martyrdom, or more specifically the act of self-sacrifice, is offered as the only means of prevailing over a superior evil power. The striking parallels between Siyāvush, the martyr-heroes of pre-Islamic legend (as in the *Shāh-nāma*) and Ḥusayn in the narrative of Karbalā', in plot and character, suggest an ancient link going back to the formative centuries of Shi'ism. Siyāvush, a victim of a family plot fueled by an old ethnic conflict, succumbs to an unavoidable tragic end. The Zurvanite undertone in this story, as in Ḥusayn's story, is unmistakeable. As has been observed for long by a number of scholars, the similarities between the ceremonies of Muḥarram and the rite of Sūvashūn (literary, *Siyāvush-khushān*) or *kīn-i Siyāvush* (vengeance of Siyāvush), commemorating the mournful death of the Persian hero at the hands of Afrāsiyāb, the Tūrānid king, is not coincidental.[52]

What Kāshifī has done, we may conclude, is to rarefy and dramatize this ancient narrative for popular taste while reinforcing its doom-laden message. Whether deliberately employed or simply a poetic device, this encoded message of fate came to reflect an impending political reality of Kāshifī's own time. A message which anticipated the capitulating of the rightful to the power of the usurping villain. We may speculate that recording this narrative of Ḥusayn and Karbalā' made particular sense in the late Tīmūrid Herat because it resonated the impending disasters that threatened Kāshifī's own world and the world of his audience. Are his antagonists the usurping Uzbeks who were about to destroy the legitimate kingdom of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, as the Umayyads of the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* had destroyed Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and his claim to rightful accession? If so, what role may we ascribe to the rising power of the Safawids and the kingly-messianic figure of Ismā'īl

and his chiliastic revolution? Is he the saviour who will eventually redress the wrong, as the Mahdī will avenge the martyrdom of Ḥusayn? Kāshifī is silent. His perspective is decidedly un-apocalyptic. In his concluding remarks, he gives a brief standard account of the twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, the anticipated Shiʿi Mahdī, also by adding the well-known *ḥadīth*: 'He will render justice when the earth is filled with oppression and injustice.' But he then adds, 'and some say that in the extreme western lands (*aqṣā-yi maghrib*), there are cities in his possession and he is confirmed by his children and offspring. But God knows the apparent and the hidden.' If *maghrib* is to be understood, even allegorically, as lands west of Herat, then we may take this as a faint allusion to Ismāʿīl and the rising house of the Safawids.[53]

However speculative, the very production of the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* in the eve of the Shiʿi rise to political power cannot be viewed as accidental. As a text celebrating the cult of martyrdom, perhaps the most central myth of Twelver Shiʿism, the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* rendered an important dual function. It 'Persianized' the Shiʿi myth as much as it prepared the ground for 'Shiʿitizing' the Persian world of the Safawid and post-Safawid times. This dual function, already underway through Ismāʿīl's campaign for establishing a Shiʿi state, is anticipated, and audibly echoed in Kāshifī's work and scripted in his narrative of the People of the House.

For generations after Kāshifī, writers of the Persian Shiʿi eulogies were influenced by the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*. Its preacher-friendly style, mixing of Persian prose and poetry, dramatic depictions of tragic scenes, intimate tone and emotional appeal to idealized moral values, acting as an instrument of collective catharsis, produced an enduring genre which contributed widely to the shaping of a complex Persian Shiʿi psyche.[54]

Notes

1. The *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* enjoyed a wide readership throughout the Persian-speaking world. A. Munzavī (*Fihrist nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-yi Fārsī* [Tehran, 1353 Sh./1974], vol.6, pp.4473–4476) identifies 69 manuscript copies dating back to 939/1532 of which 25 are in the Iranian libraries.

Khānbābā Mushār (*Fihrist-i kitābhā-yi chappī-yi Fārsī* [Tehran, 1352 Sh./1973], vol.2, p.1790) identifies 12 lithographic editions from the 19th-century, mostly published in India with the earliest dating Bombay, 1285/1868. All references in this article are to Ḥusayn Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī, *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*, ed. Abu'l-Ḥasan Shaʿrānī (Tehran, n.d. [1358 Sh./1979 ?]). The term *rawḍa* has often been rendered as 'garden.' Its original meaning however is 'meadow' or 'field,' hence here implying the plane of Karbalā' irrigated with the blood of martyrs. Kāshifī also uses *rawḍa* for graveyard.

2. *Rawḍat al-jannāt* (2nd ed. Tehran, 1367/ 1947), pp.255–256. Today, *rawḍa-khwānī* is a general term for all recitations of the sufferings of Karbalā' regardless of the text or texts used by the professional narrators. None of the approximates in English corresponds fully to *rawḍa-khwānī: dirge* is not performed by a professional nor is limited to a particular commemoration narrative. Similarly, *oraison funèbre* in French is for funerary rite. Kāshifī's *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* has been superseded by a number of later eulogies (*marāthī*) including the 11th/17th-century Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī's *Jalā' al-ʿuyūn* (*Purifier of the Eyes*), and the 19th-century Aḥmad Narāqī's *Muḥriq al-qulūb* (*Inflamer of the Hearts*) and Muḥammad Bāqir Haravī Qazvīnī, *Ṭūfān al-bukā'* (*Deluge of Tears*).

3. For *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*'s influence on the *taʿziya* narrative and style, see for example P. Chelkowski, ed. *Taʿziyeh: Ritual Drama in Iran* (New York, 1979); J. Malikpūr, *Adabiyyāt-i namāyishī dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1363 Sh./1984), vol.2, pp.211–242.

4. For the Muḥarram ceremony in the kingdom of Awadh, see J.R.I. Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shiʿism in Iran and Iraq* (Berkeley, 1988), pp.101–116, and in Hyderabad see D. Pinault, *The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community* (New York, 1992), pp.125–136. For revolutionary Iran, see A. Amanat, 'The Resurgence of Apocalyptic in Modern Islam,' *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. S.J. Stein (New York, 1998), vol.3, especially pp.257–260. For the political significance of martyrdom in modern Shiʿism see, H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London, 1982), pp.181–194 and K. Aghaie, 'The Karbala Narrative: Shiʿi Political Discourse in Modern Iran in the 1960s and 1970s,' *JIS*, 12 (2001), pp.151–176.

5. For the Shiʿi *maqātil* literature, see J. Calmard, 'Le Chiisme Imamite en Iran à l'époque Seldjoukide d'après le *Kitab al-Naqḍ*,' in *Le Monde Iranien et l'Islam* (Paris and Geneva, 1971), vol.1, pp.43–67; A. Bausani, *Religion in Iran from Zoroaster to Baha'ullah,* tr. J.M. Marchesi (New York, 2000), pp.355–359, and S.H.M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shiʿa*

Islam (London, 1979). See also Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, tr. I.K.A. Howard (London, 1981).

6. For a recent summary of debates about Kāshifī's religious affiliation, see J. ʻAbbāsī's introduction to his edition of Kāshifī's *Jawāhir al-tafsīr* (Tehran, 1379 Sh./2000), pp.83–93.

7. For later Sarbadārīs, see for example I.P. Pertrushevsky, 'Dizhenie Serbedarow v Khurāsāne,' *Uchennye Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniya AN SSSR* 14 (1956), pp.91–162; Persian trans. K. Kishāvarz, *Nahḍat-i Sarbadārān-i Khurāsān* (3rd ed., Tehran, 1351 Sh./1972), pp.94–97, and the cited passage thereof, Aḥmad Faṣīḥī Khwāfī, *Mujmal,* ed. M. Farrukh (Mashhad, 1339 Sh./1960), pp.115–119. For ʻAlī Muayyad's promotion of orthodox Shiʻism, see also S. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago, 1984), pp.70–71.

8. One example is Abū Saʻīd Ḥasan b. Ḥusayn Shīʻī Sabzawārī (alive in 753/ 1352) *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ wa mūnis al-ashbāḥ* (*Comfort of the Souls and Companion of the Spirits*), on the life of the Prophet, Fāṭima and the Twelve imams. For manuscript copies, see A. Munzavī, *Fihrist,* vol.6, pp.4465–4466. For a similar work by the same author see ibid., vol.6, pp.4420–4421.

9. In his scholarly introduction to *Futuwwat-nāma-yi Sulṭānī* (Tehran, 1350 Sh./1971), M.J. Maḥjūb overlooked the importance of the Sarbadārī connection in the creation of this work (see his introduction, pp.73–104 and 98–104).

10. Ibid., p.4.

11. For Kāshifī's chain of *ḥadīth,* see the facsimile of his 872/1467 license (*ijāza*) for a student of his cited in a manuscript copy of the *Ṣaḥīfat al-raḍawiyya,* now in the library of the Masjid Aʻẓam in Qumm, Iran. It appears in an appendix to *Rawḍa*, p.420.

12. Fakhr al-Dīn ʻAlī Ṣāfī, *Rashaḥāt ʻayn al-ḥayāt* (Lucknow, 1308/ 1890), pp.144–145, cited in J. ʻAbbāsī's introduction to *Jawāhir,* pp.44–45.

13. Niẓām al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Wāsiʻ Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-inshā'* collected by Aḥmad Khwāfī (Munshī), ed. R. Humāyūn-Farrukh (Tehran, 1357 Sh./ 1978), vol.1, p.116. This source cites a decree (*farmān*) by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā appointing Kāshifī to the Sabzawār chief judgeship for the second time (therefore after 875/1470). A second *farmān* (ibid., p.158) acknowledges his resignation but exempts Kāshifī from some taxes in the region and grants him other privileges.

14. Nūrallāh Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minīn* (Tehran, 1335 Sh./1956), vol.1, p.548.

15. Among his many works, in the *Shawāhid al-nubuwwa* Jāmī expresses pro-ʿAlī sympathies. See below for Kāshifī's extensive use of this work in his *Rawḍa.* Jāmī's biographers, including modern writers, tend to overlook these sentiments. See, for example, A. Afṣaḥzād, *Naqd va barrasī-yi āthār wa sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i Jāmī* (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), pp.105–140.

16. His title was *Murshid al-dawla* (Kāshifī, *Rawḍa,* p.13). See below for further details.

17. For Qāsim Anwār and his mission, see R. Savory, 'A 15th-Century Safavid Propagandist at Herat,' *American Oriental Society, Middle West Branch,* ed. D. Sinor (London, 1969), pp.189–197, and *Kulliyyāt-i Qāsim Anwār,* ed. S. Nafīsī (Tehran, 1337 Sh./1958), introduction pp.59–107.

18. Khwānd Mīr, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, ed. Muḥammad Akbar ʿAshīq (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), pp.112–113. Khwānd Mīr names Kāshifī in a group of seven scholars which includes Aḥmad Taftāzānī, the *Shaykh al-Islām* of Herat and son of the famous theologian. He was later executed by the Safawids for his refusal to curse the Sunni caliphs. Earlier (pp.103–108) Khwānd Mīr cites a letter by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā in which the reluctant ruler eventually grants Nāwā'ī permission to embark on a *ḥajj.*

19. For the Shaybānid conquest of the Tīmūrid empire, see Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khwānd Mīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar,* ed. J. Humā'ī (3rd ed., Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983), vol.4, pp.273–319. A vivid portrayal of the leisurely culture of Herat appears in the *Majālis al-ʿushshāq,* arguably written by Ḥusayn Bāyqarā himself (ed. G. Ṭabāṭabā'ī Majd, Tehran, 1376 Sh./1997).

20. Kāshifī himself (*Rawḍa,* p.354) gives the date of composing his work as 847 years after Ḥusayn's martyrdom (in 61/680), namely 908 AH which corresponds to July 1502 to June 1503.

21. For the Safawid conquest of Herat, see Khwānd Mīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, vol.4, pp.514–520

22. The above-mentioned reference to turmoil in 'Iraq and Shām' in July 1500 may be taken as an allusion to the earliest Qizilbāsh clashes with the Āq Qoyūnlū and other political contenders in northern Mesopotamia and eastern Syria. For a summary of Ismāʿīl's early campaigns during the year 905/1500 in eastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia before the capture of Tabrīz in 1501, see H.R. Romer, 'The Safavid Period,' in *The Cambridge History of Iran:* Volume 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge, 1986), pp.203–215.

23. Kāshifī, *Rawḍa*, pp.405, 419–420.

24. Khwānd Mīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, vol.4, pp.248–249, 318, 321, 376, 387; see also his *Makārim al-akhlāq,* p.108. We know that several of Sayyid Mīrzā's allies among the Tīmūrid princes took refuge with Shāh Ismāʿīl

and remained in his service. Badīʿ al-Zamān himself first took refuge with Shāh Ismāʿīl and then with the Mughal ruler, Bābur, before defecting again to Ismāʿīl. After the battle of Chāldurān (920/1514), Badīʿ al-Zamān took refuge for the third time with Sulṭān Salīm and was sent off from Tabrīz to Istanbul where he died shortly after.

25. *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, vol.4, p.345. Khwānd Mīr mentions that the royal Dār al-Siyāda was located on the main junction (*chahār sūq*) of the city of Herat. In another of his works, *Khātamat al-akhbār fī aḥwāl al-akhyār*, ed. Mīr Hāshim Muḥaddith (Tehran, 1372 Sh./1993), p.192, Khwānd Mīr describes Dār al-Siyāda as one of the grand monuments of ʿAlī Shār Nawāʾī. 'Everyday in that noble edifice the poor and the dervishes (or the needy) are fed.' A certain Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Jalīl was the teacher there who received an appropriate royal pension. If we apply the more technical meaning of *dār al-siyāda* in the Iranian context, it is possible to assume that this institution was devoted to charity and study of the *sayyids* of Herat and probably supervised by Shiʿi dignitaries.

26. For a list of his works, see Gh. H. Yousofi, 'Kāshifī,' *EI2*, vol.4, pp.704–705, and A. Shaʿrānī's introduction to his edition of the *Rawḍa*, pp.3–4.

27. Also variably known as Wāʿiẓ-i Harātī, Muḥaddith Shīrāzī, and by his pen-name Aṣīlī.

28. For his biography see Khwānd Mīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, vol.4, pp.332–333 and ʿAshiq's notes to *Makārīm al-akhlāq*, pp.175–176, and the sources cited therein. ʿAshiq refers to Jamāl al-Dīn's Shiʿi proclivity based on his recommendation from the pulpit to the people of Herat to accept Shiʿism after the capture of the city by the Safawids. Yet according to his friend and protégé Khwānd Mīr, he remained a Sunni to the end despite Safawid pressures on him to conform.

29. Munzavī, *Fihrist*, vol.6, pp.4467–4472. Munzavī identifies 95 manuscripts, most of them from the early 10th/16th-century. This may indicate the instant popularity of this work. The earliest copy (in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin) dates 888/1484 and only has the first part on the life of the Prophet, hence suggesting addition of the latter parts in 903/1497. In the earlier chapters of his work, Kāshifī makes occasional use of Jamāl Ḥusaynī *Rawḍat al-aḥbāb* (e.g., *Rawḍa*, p.71).

30. Kāshifī, *Rawḍa*, p.12.

31. Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Nawāʾī, *Tadhkira-yi majālis al-nafāʾis*, Persian tr. Sulṭān Muḥammad Harātī and Ḥakīm Shāh Muḥammad Qazvīnī, ed. ʿA.A. Ḥikmat (Tehran, 1363 Sh./1984), p.268.

32. Ibid.

33. *Wāʿiẓān kīn jilwih bar miḥrāb u minbar mīkunand/ chūn bi khalwat mīravand ān kār-i dīgar mīkunand.* 'That other act' in Ḥāfiẓ may have been an allusion to drinking. In this context, it probably means the 'best of the acts' (*khayr al-ʿamal*), as in the Shiʿi *adhān*, which the Sunnis mocked as being a reference to Shiʿi practice of temporary marriage (*mutʿa*).

34. Ṣafī, *Rashaḥāt*, vol.2, p.491.

35. After a sermon in the Sabzawār Jāmiʿ Mosque, in which Kāshifī stated that the archangel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet 12,000 times, a hostile old man in the audience put him on the spot. He asked if Gabriel also appeared to ʿAlī. Facing a zealous pro-ʿAlī audience, the artful Kāshifī claimed that Gabriel appeared to ʿAlī 24,000 times. He backed this claim by quoting the famous *ḥadīth*: 'I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī is my gate;' hence each time Gabriel visited the Prophet, he must have passed through ʿAlī's gate twice (Shūshtarī, *Majālis,* vol.1, p.548).

36. *Anwār-i suhaylī* is an ornate and rather longwinded Persian rendering of Bīdpā'ī's famous *Kalīla wa-Dimna.* It is based on the masterful Persian translation by Abu'l-Maʿālī Naṣrallāh Munshī. A Turkish version of the *Anwār* was translated into French by the order of the Louis XIV, which was to be plagiarized by La Fontaine in his *Les Fables.*

37. For Turkish accounts of Karbalā', see I. Melikoff, 'Le drame de Kerbéla dans littérature époque Turque,' *Revue des Études Islamiques,* 34 (1966), pp.133–148.

38. Kāshifī, *Rawḍa*, p.276.

39. For a brief description of this work, see Afṣaḥzād, *Naqd*, p.188. For manuscript copies and table of contents see Munzavī, *Fihrist*, vol.2(i), pp.1264–1265, and vol.6, pp.4499–44501.

40. Of the 67 works that Kāshifī mentioned by title, the largest number of citations, 26, belong to Jāmī's *Shawāhid.* With the exception of the Qur'an, the second most frequently cited is *Nūr al-a'imma* by the well-known 6th/12th-century Abu'l-Mu'ayyad Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī, a *ḥadīth* scholar with evidently pro-Shiʿi tendencies, which is mentioned 20 times. The *Kanz al-gharā'ib,* an account of Shiʿi sufferings by an anonymous author is mentioned 12 times. Neither of the latter two works can be found in Shiʿi bibliographies such as Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī's *al-Dharīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-Shīʿa* and Munzavī's *Fihrist.*

41. Kāshifī, *Rawḍa,* p.341

42. Ibid., p.254.

43. Ibid., p.15.

44. This constitutes chapter one of the *Rawḍa* (pp.15–67). The enigma of Jesus' absence from the narrative of Karbalā' may be explained by the

Islamic denial of the Christian doctrine of crucifixion. Kāshifī's sources for Biblical prophets apparently are the Qur'an and the apocryphal stories of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* category.

45. Ibid., pp.67–117. These are subjects of chapters two and three, corresponding to the second and third days of Muḥarram mourning.

46. Ibid., pp.192–193, 242–243, where the author provides a fuller and more passionate account as a prelude to Ḥusayn's entry into the plain of Karbalā'.

47. Ibid., pp.63–64.

48. Bausani, *Religion*, pp.352–353, and H. Halm, *Shiism*, tr. J. Watson (Edinburgh, 1991), pp.139–141. For a full study of the subject, see M. Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Āshūrā' in Twelver Shi'ism* (The Hague, 1978).

49. Kāshifī, *Rawḍa*, pp.136–137. The four other great weepers consist of three prophets of the Old Testament, Adam, Jacob and Joseph, and the fourth Shi'i Imam, Zayn al-'Ābidīn 'Alī. The latter is credited for weeping forty years for the massacre of his family at Karbalā'.

50. Ibid., p.62.

51. Ibid., pp.248–249; and again, p.250: 'I am entangled in a noose (*kamand*) that has been thrown from the heavens.' Indeed, the whole section prior to his entry into the Karbalā' plane revolves on the theme of destiny.

52. See Bausani, *Religion*, pp.353–354, and Halm, *Shi'ism*, pp.141–142. All accounts trace the rite of Siyāvush to Narshakhī's *Ta'rīkh-i Bukhārā*.

53. Ibid., p.418. On the other hand, *maghrib* may be understood in its classical sense as the geographical west of the Islamic world, and hence Kāshifī's remark is to be taken as a relic of the Fatimid messianic legacy in North Africa.

54. The study of *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*'s influence on later works of the same genre deserves a separate study, as does the tracing of the mourning literature on the shaping of a Shi'i-Iranian psyche and its historical manifestation.

Part 3

Commemorating Rulers, Dynasties and Conquests

14

Khurāsānī Revolutionaries and al-Mahdī's Title

Michael L. Bates

The first Sunni caliph to adopt an individual official honorific title, or *laqab*, was the second Abbasid caliph, Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad (136–158/754–775).[1] The title that he chose, al-Manṣūr, which is to say 'The One Granted Victory,' or simply 'Victor,' is the name by which he became generally known from his own time until today, just as all those who claimed the caliphate after him, whether Sunni or Shiʿi, whether Abbasid, Fatimid, Zaydi – or even the Mahdīs of the Sudan – are better known by their *laqab*s than by their actual names. In the same way, most secular Islamic rulers, after the 4th/10th century or so, had honorific titles that often replaced their names in official contexts and in historical accounts. Al-Manṣūr's innovation established a distinctive and conspicuous Muslim practice, which is without parallel in any other culture, and yet his decision is far from clearly understood. Part of the reason for our uncertainty is the absence of any account or discussion of the matter in Islamic histories. The earliest Arab historians do not mention al-Manṣūr's adoption of a title. One later historian, al-Masʿūdī, mentions it with a brief explanation but no elaboration; no other writer seems to mention it

again. The lack of interest among Muslim writers in the origin of *laqab*s is puzzling, but is perhaps to be explained by their assumption, after a few generations, that official *laqab*s for caliphs had always existed.

Let us define the subject precisely. In every culture, there have been titles and attributes of office that named the office and its holders. These are used often as an attachment to the office holder's name: such titles as 'king,' 'emperor,' 'president,' or 'secretary.' The caliphs of course had such titles and attributes: *khalīfa* or caliph being one of them, along with *imām*, *amīr al-mu'minīn* and others.[2] Every caliph, it seems, was regarded as possessor of all these titles and attributes, although not all of them were always used as official titles. In this article, the distinction between 'titles' and 'attributes' will be maintained. 'Titles' are designations used in official contexts such as correspondence, coins and monumental inscriptions as a standard part of formal nomenclature. Up to al-Manṣūr's time, the official titulature of documents and inscriptions was simply '*Abdallāh* [name] *amīr al-mu'minīn*, which may be translated as 'Slave of God [name] Commander of the Believers.' ''Abdallāh' and 'amīr al-mu'minīn' are therefore certainly to be taken as titles. 'Attributes' will be used here for designations that were generally acknowledged to belong to every caliph, but were not used formally as part of their nomenclature. 'Imam,' that is, 'religious authority,' and '*khalīfa*' or 'representative' (of God or of the Prophet) were generally acknowledged attributes of every caliph.[3] A third category of designation will be labeled here 'epithet,' discussed immediately below.

The titulature adopted by al-Manṣūr, however, was different. It was not the same for every holder of an office, but was individual and not passed on to successors. These personal titles nevertheless were official. In official use, personal titles took priority over the caliph's own name and were used to identify him in all official contexts, such as monumental inscriptions, correspondence, documents of every sort and coin inscriptions. The caliph was also commonly known by his personal title in unofficial contexts, such as narrative histories and, so far as we can judge by anecdote, in conversation. In longer official contexts the caliph's *ism* or original

name was also used, but it was secondary. Their contemporaries knew these men by their honorific titles, and so do we today.

There is another important distinction to emphasize. These individual honorifics, which were formally adopted, consistently used and official, are firmly to be distinguished from the one-of-a-kind complimentary epithets, which are descriptive rather than official, that were used by poets and orators, including the individual referring to himself. A conspicuous example is the epithet 'al-saffāḥ,' used only once by al-Manṣūr's brother Abu'l-ʿAbbās ʿAbdallāh, the first Abbasid caliph, in a public speech, as one of a series of terms to describe himself: *anā al-saffāḥ al-mubīḥ wa'l-thā'ir al-mubīr*.[4] For some reason, that one epithet caught on among later writers, and that is the name by which we know him today, but careful writers, medieval and modern, have always known that the term was not a title and not his *laqab*. Most early writers, such as al-Ṭabarī, never use it for him. Confusion between casually used epithets and officially adopted titles is one of the most frequent sources of error among modern writers, who attribute a title to an individual on the basis of a line of verse or a comment in an anecdote. Not only is such evidence not indicative of an official title, one must doubt whether it was taken seriously as an actual attribute by the speaker, by the recipient of the compliment, or by the others present. We can make it a rule of thumb: if there is any doubt or argument whether a caliph or ruler had such-and-such title, if the evidence is ambiguous, if there is only a single bit of evidence, he did not have it. Official titles were used constantly and in every context. There can be no doubt of their reality, because the evidence from texts and inscriptions is abundant. If doubt exists, the purported title was not a title at all, merely an epithet. All messianic or other titles ascribed to individuals before al-Manṣūr and his ʿAlid contemporary Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh are to be regarded as epithets only. It is the purpose of this article to examine the turning point, an *awwal* in Islamic history, when such epithets, for the first time, became part of official caliphal nomenclature.

After al-Manṣūr, caliphs either took their titles at the time of their accession to the caliphate or, very commonly, had already

been given them by their predecessors when they received the oath of allegiance as designated successor to the caliphate, as *walī al-ʿahd*. This same title was never changed when they became caliph. Al-Manṣūr's son and designated successor Muḥammad had such a title, al-Mahdī, which he began using during his father's lifetime, although, as will be shown, he received and began using the title before he was sworn as *walī al-ʿahd*. In fact, both father and son began using their titles officially at nearly the same time. Al-Mahdī's continued use of his title when he became caliph, and his grant of parallel titles to his two sons when he had oaths sworn to them as his successors, served to confirm al-Manṣūr's innovation as standard caliphal practice, which may not have been his intention when he adopted his title.

It is interesting that the selection of a title by later caliphs is treated by contemporary writers with the same casual neglect that the use of titles by al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī is treated. We have very few and brief descriptions of the selection of a title for only a few caliphs. For example, al-Ṣūlī describes how he drew up a list for al-Rāḍī, from which the caliph made an unexpected choice.[5] There are also silly fictions: al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Mutawakkil are said to have had their titles indicated in dreams.[6] What is entirely lacking in the surviving literature is any explicit statement of the reason for a caliph's choice of his particular title, or any indication of the meaning of the title for its user and for his contemporaries. Nor does the medieval literature seem to have any general discussion of caliphal titles, their significance and the rules for their use.[7] Why were medieval Muslims so uninterested in this conspicuous feature of government? It is possible, of course, that they were interested and did write on the subject, but the writings were not preserved in a later age when caliphs were rare and reign-names had largely ceased to be used. The Ottomans, the Shahs and the Mughals all had many honorific titles but they, unlike their medieval predecessors, were primarily known by their real names.

Al-Manṣūr, when he decided to call himself 'Victor,' was of course not bound by the practice of his successors. We do not need to assume that he, like many of his successors, took his title

al-Manṣūr when he received the oath of allegiance, nor that al-Mahdī, like many of his successors, received his title when he became *walī al-ʿahd*; al-Mahdī might have been given his title earlier, at the same time his father took his own title. One thing at least might seem safe to assume: that al-Mahdī, the son, did not get a title before the father, al-Manṣūr, took his. This latter assumption, however, is wrong, or wrong in some sense, or rather, as will be seen, both right and wrong. How and when al-Mahdī got his *laqab* is the subject of this paper, although al-Manṣūr's assumption of his own title is an essential part of the context.

There are six pieces or bodies of evidence bearing on the adoption of titles by al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī. These are (1) a statement by the later historian al-Masʿūdī; (2) an exchange of correspondence between al-Manṣūr and the contemporary ʿAlid Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya; (3) a correspondence with al-Manṣūr's first designated successor, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā; (4) the silver coinage of al-Mahdī's provincial capital, Rayy; (5) the copper coinage of the same mint, and (6) the copper coinage from the eastern regions of al-Mahdī's province Khurāsān. It seems more convenient and less confusing to refer to al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī consistently by those designations, rather than by their names or *kunya*s, even in the period before they adopted their titles. The medieval writers do the same: al-Ṭabarī refers to the second caliph indiscriminately as Abū Jaʿfar or al-Manṣūr without any chronological distinction. For later caliphs as well, it is common for the medieval writers to call them by their honorific even in the years before their accession and before they got their title.

Most previous discussions of al-Manṣūr's titulature ignore all this evidence, scanty though it may be. They largely rest on the philological, theological, and eschatological analysis of the meaning of the two honorifics.[8] Very few writers[9] have noticed an explicit statement on the subject by the 4th/10th-century historian al-Masʿūdī, a statement which seems entirely plausible and which makes irrelevant much of the previous convoluted reasoning on the subject. In his *al-Tanbīh*,[10] al-Masʿūdī briefly describes the attempted overthrow of Abbasid rule in 145/762 by the brothers Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, who were descendants of the

fourth caliph ʿAlī, and states: 'Immediately after killing Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, [al-Manṣūr] took the *laqab*[11] al-Manṣūr.' The term used for 'immediately after' is *bi-ʿaqb*, which can also be translated 'on the heels of' since *ʿaqb* means 'heel,' but *bi-ʿaqb* can also mean 'as a result of.' Al-Masʿūdī says, in sum: because of his victory he called himself 'Victor.' The adoption of the title can therefore be put at the end of the year 145/January or February 763.

The epithet al-Manṣūr was a well-established idiomatic Arabic term, in its simple banal meaning, as in the generic war-cry *Yā fūlān yā Manṣūr*, 'Victory to so-and-so,'[12] or with profound eschatological implications, as described by Bernard Lewis and others.[13] The difference between al-Manṣūr and his predecessors is that he did not merely say in a speech '*anā al-manṣūr*,' in the way that his brother had said '*anā al-saffāḥ*.' He adopted this epithet as a permanent addition to his nomenclature. Although there is no strictly contemporary evidence for his adoption of this title, which does not appear on any known inscription, coin, glass weight or papyrus,[14] there can be no possibility of doubt that he used it. It is used for him almost constantly by early historians such as al-Ṭabarī, in quoted contemporary documents and inscriptions as well as narrative text, and in anecdotes attributed to people who knew the caliph.

Among the documents with his name, two pairs are of particular interest. Al-Ṭabarī transcribes a correspondence between al-Manṣūr and the ʿAlid Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh (known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya) early in the latter's rebellion, which would be just after the middle of 145/October 762.[15] Al-Manṣūr heads his letter 'from ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh Amīr al-Mu'minīn,' that is, 'From the Slave of God ʿAbdallāh Commander of the Believers,' an extremely austere titulature[16] which is typical of early caliphs. Al-Ṭabarī calls attention to this nomenclature by repeating it after quoting the letter.[17] The letter therefore supports al-Masʿūdī's statement; it shows that in the first part of the year 145/762 al-Manṣūr was not yet 'al-Manṣūr.' In his letter, al-Manṣūr addresses Muḥammad simply as Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, just as Muḥammad in his response addresses al-Manṣūr simply as ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad, but

Muḥammad calls himself ''Abdallāh *al-Mahdī* Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh,' that is, 'The Servant of God, the Mahdī, Muḥammad, son of ʿAbdallāh.' This nomenclature is extremely significant.[18] Muḥammad uses the epithet al-Mahdī precisely in the way caliphal *laqab*s were used in official correspondence and other contexts from al-Manṣūr onward. Before this time, other figures were called 'Mahdī' and similar eschatological epithets, but there is no reference to any use of such an epithet as an official title by anyone before the ʿAlid Muḥammad. On the evidence of this quoted correspondence, we should conclude that he was in fact the first caliph to use an honorific *laqab*, and that al-Manṣūr followed his precedent. It is not wrong to call Muḥammad a caliph, although most later historians would not acknowledge him as such. He of course regarded himself as the legitimate head of the Muslim community, and shortly after this point, al-Ṭabarī quotes someone addressing him orally as '*amīr al-muʾminīn*,'[19] a nomenclature used only by caliphs.

The second pair of letters was written two years later, in a correspondence between al-Manṣūr and his cousin ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, the *walī al-ʿahd*. Al-Manṣūr heads his letter 'from ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh al-Manṣūr Amīr al-Muʾminīn to ʿĪsa b. Mūsā.'[20] This is the same protocol used in the earlier letter to address Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, except for the insertion of the *laqab* al-Manṣūr. Its absence in the earlier letter and its presence in the latter one is quasi-contemporary evidence that al-Manṣūr had adopted his new title in the interim; al-Masʿūdī's statement is therefore further supported. ʿĪsā, in his response, was curt: 'To ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh Amīr al-Muʾminīn from ʿĪsā b. Mūsā.'[21] As courtesy to the caliph had always demanded, he puts himself second rather than first, but he omits 'al-Manṣūr,' which is to say that he, a powerful member of the Abbasid family, will have no part of this pretentious 'Victor' innovation. The *laqab* was not yet what it would become, a natural form of address, taken for granted.

The remainder of the evidence listed previously relates to al-Mahdī. The evidence for his title is all numismatic. No one has yet brought forward any statement about al-Mahdī's title as successor in the texts or in inscriptions. Al-Mahdī, whose proper name

was Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, was appointed governor of Khurāsān in 141/758–59.[22] Khurāsān at that time, and for decades to come, named an administration that included a great deal more than Khurāsān the historical region. Its governor made his capital at Rayy, in what later geographers call the Jibāl province.[23] From there his authority extended eastward to the frontier of Muslim authority, beyond Khurāsān, across the Oxus, deep into Central Asia. Al-Mahdī was about fifteen years old at the time of his appointment. An experienced commander, Khazīm b. Khuzayma, was appointed as his chief of staff. Al-Mahdī was still governor there in 145/762 when the rebellion of the ʿAlids Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm began in Arabia and Iraq.

In that year 145/762, dirhams were issued at Rayy. These were the first silver coins to be issued there, or anywhere in the Jibāl, for fourteen years (the last regular series of silver coins from Rayy was issued from 90 to 98/708–717; ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya issued silver dirhams there from 128 to 131/745–49). Two 145 varieties are known. The first variety has only the standard inscriptions of the early Abbasid silver coinage. It is, therefore, anonymous. Three examples are known.[24] The second variety has, as its reverse central inscription, *mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'among the things ordered by the Commander al-Mahdī Muḥammad, son of the Commander of the Faithful.' Ten examples of this issue are recorded.[25] Similar dirhams of 146/763–64 are quite common, as are those of all subsequent years at Rayy until 155/771–72, when production of dirhams ceased.

How can we understand this evidence? The appearance of al-Mahdī's name on the reverse of the second variety, which is the first appearance of any person's name on any Umayyad or Abbasid silver coinage,[26] shows that al-Mahdī received his official title in 145/762–63, as Bacharach has argued from the same evidence.[27] Bacharach believed that the grant of the title to al-Manṣūr's son was probably one way in which the caliph met the Shiʿi religious challenge, but he noted that the numismatic evidence known to him did not exclude the possibility that the title was granted earlier without being used on coins. He suggested that the new inscription was intended to proclaim that the

Abbasids, not the ʿAlids, were the legitimate successors to the Prophet. The anonymous variety of 145/762–63, which Bacharach did not mention, must be presumed to be the earlier of the two. It strongly supports Bacharach's argument, showing that earlier in the year, al-Mahdī either did not have a title or was not allowed to put it on coins. The appearance of his title on coins first in 145/762–63 is a result of his acquisition of the title, or of the right to use it publicly, and not merely a result of chance survival of the coins. One can go further. The rarity of the earlier issue, the relative scarcity of the second and the absence of any coinage from previous years make it safe to conclude that silver coinage began in Rayy in the year 145/762–63, and that it began quite late in the year (otherwise the coins would be more common); and that the anonymous coinage, known from three examples, was issued for a shorter time than the coins with al-Mahdī's name, known from ten examples so far. Since the dangerous part of the ʿAlid uprising, Ibrāhīm's rebellion in Baṣra, also took place late in the year (it began in Basra on 1 Ramaḍān 145/23 November 762, and ended with Ibrāhīm's death on 25 Dhu'l-Qaʿda 145/14 February 763), it further seems plausible to make a connection between that event and the initiation of the anonymous coinage, so that the issue with al-Mahdī's title would be even later, probably after the Abbasid victory. All these conclusions accord well with al-Masʿūdī's statement that al-Manṣūr took his title as a result of his victory, and also with the reasonable presumption that al-Manṣūr gave the title al-Mahdī to his son at the same time he adopted one for himself.[28]

The existence of the anonymous dirham issue makes it likely that the decision to begin striking coins and the decision to put al-Mahdī's name on the coins were two separate acts. It might be, for example, that Rayy was authorized to strike dirhams by al-Manṣūr or al-Mahdī in order to mobilize resources for the battle, for example, by turning stocks of bar silver into silver money. Later, but not much later, al-Mahdī was authorized to name himself on silver coins, which he did, using his title. It seems compelling that the unprecedented authorization to name himself on dirhams was given to him simultaneously with the title itself.

Another body of numismatic evidence from Rayy further supports the conclusion that al-Mahdī got his title immediately after the victory over the ʿAlids. This is the copper coinage of the city, which was issued intermittently under the later Umayyads, when no silver dirhams were issued there and in the early Abbasid years. These latter copper coins, issued in 138, 139, 141, 143, 144 and 145 AH, have a formula naming the local political authorities (see Table 1). Although al-Mahdī was appointed in 141, he was not named on the copper *fals* coins until 143, perhaps because he first went on to the east before returning to Rayy. From that year onward to 145, the formula is the same: the coinage is ordered by an official who identifies himself as the agent (*ʿāmil*) for the *amīr* Muḥammad, son of the Commander of the Faithful. By 145/762–63, this agent was Salm b. Qutayba, son of the famous Umayyad governor of Khurāsān. Here is the crucial point: just as the dirhams of that year can be divided into those without al-Mahdī's name and those with it, the copper *fulūs* of the year can be divided into those without al-Mahdī's title and those with it. Those without the *laqab* have Salm's name, and those with the *laqab* do not.

Table 14.1
Copper Coins of Rayy, 138–45/755–63

Date (AH)	Inscriptions	Remarks
138	*bism Allh mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr Jahwar b. al-Marrār bi'l-Rayy*	Jahwar must have been governor 137–138; see al-Ṭabarī III, pp.119–120, 122. Note the definite article of Jahwar's father's name.
139	obv.: ... *bi'l-Rayy ʿalā yadayy ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Jaʿfar* rev.: *mimmā amara bihi ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh Amīr al-Mu'minīn sana tisaʿ wa-thalathīn wa-mi'a*	ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd has not been plausibly identified. Since the caliph, unusually, is named as the executive official for Rayy, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd must have been a low-level

Date (AH)	Inscriptions	Remarks
		functionary for him.
141	*mimmā amara bihi ʿAbdallāh Abdallāh Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿalā yadayy ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Jaʿfar*	In 141 al-Mahdī was sent to Khurāsān as governor. This issue was presumably before his appointment or arrival.
143	*mimmā amara bihi Aṣghar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿāmil al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	Aṣghar is otherwise unknown.
143	*mimmā amara bihi ʿImrān b. Ṣaliḥ ʿāmil al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	ʿImrān, if that is the correct reading, is otherwise unknown, nor has any individual with a similar name been proposed.
144	*mimmā amara bihi ʿImrān b. Ṣaliḥ ʿāmil al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	
145	*mimmā amara bihi Salm b. Qutayba ʿāmil al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	Salm is the son of the famous Umayyad governor. Although his position as *ʿāmil* is not explicitly stated, his presence at Rayy is mentioned, al-Ṭabarī III, p.305. Cf. Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 83.
145	*mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	Practically identical coppers were issued until 155.

Salm was a very prominent official whose career at this time is fairly well known. Al-Manṣūr summoned him from Rayy to bring troops to Iraq when Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh raised his rebellion, and appointed him governor of Baṣra after the victory.[29] The copper issue without his name and with al-Mahdī's title was therefore struck after his departure. At first sight, one might ask

where are the coins issued after Salm's departure but before the victory and al-Mahdī's use of his title; however, intermediate coins lacking both Salm's name and al-Mahdī's title do not have to exist. Salm's assignment to Iraq was probably temporary at the start, leaving him still officially the agent for al-Mahdī even during his absence; it is also possible that no coins were struck during his absence, since the need for coinage would be reduced by the diminution of the force stationed at Rayy (another general was also called away, with 4,000 troops). This evidence, then, fits well with the rest. Earlier in the year, when Salm was still in Rayy, he is named on the coppers of Rayy and al-Mahdī is named without a *laqab*. At the end of the year, after Salm was called away and then appointed governor of Baṣra, he is no longer named at Rayy and al-Mahdī is named alone with his *laqab*.

No single element of the five bodies of evidence discussed so far, namely, al-Masʿūdī's statement, al-Manṣūr's correspondence with Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh and that with ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, and the dirhams and the *fulūs* of Rayy, gives a precise and unequivocal indication of the time when al-Mahdī acquired and began using his title, but all this evidence accords with the plausible hypothesis that al-Manṣūr took his title as a result of his victory over Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh in late 145/762–63 and that he granted his son Muḥammad the title al-Mahdī at the same time,[30] along with the right to mint dirhams in Rayy and, slightly later, the right to be named on those dirhams. In this context, it would be easy to see al-Mahdī's *laqab* as a response or reaction to Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh's use of the same *laqab*. A prophecy was current that the Mahdī would have the same names as the Prophet himself, Muḥammad the son of ʿAbdallāh. Both the ʿAlid and al-Manṣūr's son had those names. Al-Mahdī's title might be seen as an assertion of the validity and reality of the Abbasid claim against others, including the defeated ʿAlid. One wonders, parenthetically, precisely what a victorious dynasty, already established for thirteen years, meant to convey by designating a future caliph as the Mahdī. If the world needed a revolutionary saviour to sweep away injustice, why did not al-Manṣūr himself commence the task instead of leaving it to his successor?

We may also note that al-Mahdī was not, at this time, the first official successor or *walī al-ʿahd*, and could not have been named for that reason, as is often stated in coin catalogues. In 145/762–63, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, the caliph's cousin, was still the designated successor of al-Manṣūr. At most, al-Mahdī could have been the second designated successor after ʿĪsā, but it does not seem that he was even that, even though al-Ṭabarī states in an earlier context, in 141/758–59, that al-Mahdī was already the *walī al-ʿahd*. That statement is only part of al-Ṭabarī's headline for the narrative of al-Mahdī's governorate in Rayy. Al-Ṭabarī does not record any ceremony of appointment for al-Mahdī until 147/764, when al-Mahdī was inserted ahead of ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, nor does any attributed historical report provided by al-Ṭabarī refer to al-Mahdī as *walī al-ʿahd* in a context before the latter date.[31] Al-Mahdī was never, as sometimes thought, second successor after ʿĪsā; he first became *walī al-ʿahd* when he was inserted ahead of ʿĪsā in the succession. Al-Ṭabarī erred in his headline. The grant of a title to al-Mahdī and the inscription of his name on coins in his governorate have nothing to do with his later accession as *walī al-ʿahd*.[32] His name was not put on dirhams elsewhere in 145/762–63, as one would expect if his designation on the dirhams of Rayy was a consequence of his designation as successor. For that matter, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā is not named on any coins, not even on the coins of his governorate in Kūfa, as would surely have been the case if it were the practice to name the *walī al-ʿahd*. It did not become Abbasid practice to name the *walī al-ʿahd* on the coinage, by right of that position, until the reign of al-Mutawakkil, in another coinage epoch. *Walī al-ʿahd*s are, to be sure, named on Abbasid coins in the earlier epoch, but only in provinces that they governed and in their capacity as governors.

The same is true of al-Mahdī. Evidently he was allowed to begin minting anonymous dirhams at Rayy during the crisis, but whether this was a personal honour or merely a pragmatic emergency measure, we cannot say. The subsequent permission to put his name, including the *laqab* al-Mahdī as part of his official nomenclature, was surely a personal honour as well as a public proclamation, but it is to be noted that this was done only within

his territory, Khurāsān, in the larger sense and from 152–55/769–72 in the adjacent Caucasian provinces. He was never named on the coinage of the capital, Baghdad, or anywhere in Iraq, or elsewhere in the caliphate. In 145 AH, his name appeared on dirhams in Rayy, which was then the only dirham mint of his governorate; it continued to appear there only until 155/772, the end of his governorate of Khurāsān, after which no further coins were issued in Rayy during al-Manṣūr's reign. In 146–48/763–66 similar dirhams were issued from al-Mahdī's Ṭabaristān mint with his name and *laqab*. These were the only years in which these two mints issued dirhams in al-Manṣūr's reign. Both were in the administrative sphere of Khurāsān.[33]

He is also named from 152 to 155/769–72 on dirhams of Armenia and Arrān.[34] This latter evidence has been ignored by the several writers who have treated the coinage of these areas.[35] They must have presumed that he was named because of his position as *walī al-ʿahd*, without local administrative significance. To the contrary: since he is otherwise named only on mints within his territories, his nomenclature on the coins of the Caucasus can only mean that these provinces were added to his territories in that span of years. One can extend this insight: officials are always named on Abbasid coins by virtue of their territorial authority over the issuing mint, and never by virtue of their rank in succession, their family position, or their office in the central administration.

Thus, looking at all this evidence so far, one might conclude, with a certain complacency, that al-Mahdī's title was granted by his father as part of the celebration and proclamation of the great victory of 145. But if one then looks at the final body of evidence listed above, the copper coinage of Khurāsān itself under al-Mahdī's government, one will be surprised to find oneself wrong. Even though al-Mahdī himself, on the coinage struck directly under his control, did not use a *laqab* until 145, his *laqab* was being used long before, as early as 143 AH, on certain copper coins of eastern Khurāsān ordered by his governors there.

No one seems to have studied these coins, as a group or as issues in context. For European and American scholars, they have

been little known, since they are largely found in the territories of the former Russian Empire and USSR. There is more literature in Russian,[36] but even in that language it is difficult to find a synthetic discussion. These are the local copper issues of the cities of Khurāsān proper and of Mā warā' al-Nahr in the early years of the Abbasid caliphate. No city there or elsewhere issued a continuous series of standard copper coins year after year. Their issues were intermittent, according to need and feasibility. Each issue was somewhat different, but in this period nearly all copper coins had some form of the *shahāda* divided between the centers of the obverse and the reverse, with circular inscriptions on each side around the central area giving the place and date of minting and the name or names of the governor or governors of the city. Both singular and plural are appropriate because often there was more than one level of administration. There was a governor-general of the entire region, al-Mahdī for example, and provincial or city governors under him. Either or both the governor-general and the local governors were named on the coinage.

The earliest issue naming al-Mahdī as such was minted at Bukhārā in 143/760–61. On these coppers, the mint and date are on the obverse, while the reverse has *amara bihi al-Ashʿath fī wilayat al-Mahdī al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn*. There is no doubt of the inscription, the anomalous features of which insure a close reading. It begins abruptly *amara bihi* ('ordered it') without the *mimmā* which normally precedes *amara*; but this curtailment is not unparalleled and surely is an accommodation to the length of the inscription which has to be fitted into the margin. Then, there is the name al-Ashʿath: no such person has been found in the historical texts, which makes one control the reading closely; but it is correct. Whoever this al-Ashʿath was, he was probably the same as al-Ashʿath b. Yaḥyā named on the coins of Samarqand in the next year, 144/761–62, in an otherwise identical reverse inscription. The phrase *fī wilayat*, written in that way without *alif*, may seem unusual, but it seems to be a frequent regional idiom on coins of Khurāsān in al-Manṣūr's reign. After al-Mahdī's administration, it is used with the names of other governors, as shown in Table 2.

Then we have the word 'al-Mahdī,' which is absolutely certain, as is the date of this issue, 143 AH, two years before his father acquired his *laqab*. In all later usage, the title al-Amīr precedes the official's *laqab* and name, but not here, indicating that in fact al-Mahdī is not used here as a sort of conventional honorific. The term seems to be properly a description or identification: this is not just a man who calls himself al-Mahdī, this is *the Mahdī*. It is then followed by an explicit identification of this person as the Amīr Muḥammad, the son of the Commander of the Believers.

In the same year at Samarqand, not far from Bukhārā, a copper issue under a different governor has a similar political inscription but without the *laqab*: *amara bihi al-Amīr Dā'ūd b. Karār fī wilayat Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Dā'ūd b. Karār, like al-Ashʿath, is otherwise unknown. The structure of the inscription is the same, but both the description al-Mahdī and the title al-Amīr are omitted from the governor-general's nomenclature. At Marw in 143, the governor ʿAbd al-Malik (b. Yazīd) used a variation of the standard inscription of Rayy.

In the next year, 144/761–62, the governor al-Ashʿath had taken control of Samarqand as well as, or instead of, Bukhārā, and put the same inscription on a Samarqand issue that he had used in Bukhārā, *amara bihi al-Ashʿath b. Yaḥyā fī wilayat al-Mahdī al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Pending further discoveries, it seems that it is only this one governor who calls al-Manṣūr's son al-Mahdī before the time that we would have thought he obtained the title officially. In 145 there is no Khurāsānī coin that calls him al-Mahdī (the news of his official adoption of the *laqab* could hardly have arrived before the end of the year). In 146/763–64, al-Mahdī is used at Herat, and in 147 Dā'ūd b. Karār, becomes governor of Herat, calls himself *ʿāmil al-Amīr al-Mahdī Muḥammad*, but in Nīsābūr in the same year coins were issued in the name of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh Amīr al-Mu'minīn, mentioning both al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī but without their *laqab*s. Yet another governor, Maʿbad, at Bukhārā in 148/765–66, ordered an issue *fī wilayat al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-muslimīn b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and similar nomenclature was used at Balkh in 149/766–67.

The most remarkable issue after al-Mahdī took his title was

minted at Bukhārā in 151/768, and is relatively common today. It was struck under the authority of al-Junayd b. Khalid (*sic*, without *alif* in the father's name), who calls himself *ʿāmil al-imām al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-Muslimīn*. The title *al-imām* is clear and unimpeachable. Al-Mahdī is therefore the first Muslim to be designated as *imām* on coins, which is remarkable enough; he is furthermore one of only three Abbasids given the title on coins; but almost incredibly, he is called *imām* during the lifetime of his father the caliph! How can this be? It might be relevant that al-Junayd was earlier among the Khurāsānīs persecuted for allegedly advocating the rule of the descendants of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[37]

The mints of greater Khurāsān issued numerous other coins with interesting politico-ideological inscriptions, which are listed in Table 2 at the end of this paper. Not all have to do with al-Mahdī, but many evince the spirit of the Abbasid revolution, such as the coin of Balkh, 142/759–60, ordered by al-Amīr al-Ḥasan b. Ḥumrān[38] who calls himself *ʿabd iẓhār daʿwat Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*, 'servant of the propagation of the summons of the Commander of the Believers, may God make him generous.' The *ahl al-bayt* slogan,[39] which was used on all the coins of ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya and many of the coins of Abū Muslim, continued frequently to be used after the revolution in Khurāsān, continuously from 132 to 136, and then again in 138, and in 143 AH at Samarqand, in contrast to the rest of the caliphate where it was never used after 132, the year of the Abbasid triumph.

In this context of revolutionary enthusiasm, the premature nomenclature of al-Mahdī in Khurāsān ought to be seen as a spontaneous expression of belief rather than as deliberate manipulation. Although it seems that only one governor, al-Ashʿath b. Yaḥyā, was indiscreet enough to place the epithet on coins before it became official, it is unlikely that his enthusiasm was unique. He could not have conceived or dared to use the term if the concept was not well-known and generally accepted by those around him. Even though suppressed and discouraged elsewhere, revolutionary spirit still ran high in Khurāsān, homeland of the army that had conquered the caliphate. In 137/754–55, for example, 60,000 people are said to have followed Sunbādh in his

march westward to take revenge for al-Manṣūr's assassination of Abū Muslim.[40] Rebellion followed rebellion there: al-Mahdī was originally appointed governor of Khurāsān in 141/758–59 to bring down ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who had been sent to repress ʿAlid extremism among the Khurāsān officers and leaders of the *daʿwa*, but used the persecution to build his own independence.[41] Many Khurāsānīs still expected great things from the Prophet's kinfolk, who were now on the throne as caliphs. The first of these caliphs, Abu'l-ʿAbbās and Abū Jaʿfar, were perhaps not the revolutionaries the army had expected, but this boy with the same name as the Messenger of God might well be: why not? He *could* be the real Mahdī.

Confronting Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh the Abbasid's *laqab* with that of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh the ʿAlid's, in the light of the Khurāsānī numismatic evidence, we might well ask whose was the priority: who first claimed to be the Mahdī; or should we rather say, on whose behalf was the assertion first made; and who then responded to the other? It is difficult to judge: the conspiracy and propaganda for Muḥammad the ʿAlid had been going on for some years before his rebellion broke out in Medina in 145/762–63.[42] Reportedly his father and others identified him as the Mahdī when he was born.[43] As early as 126/744, Muḥammad received the oath of many of the Banū Hāshim as leader and Mahdī, although he was still yet to be proclaimed.[44] Doubtless there were many others who believed him to be the Mahdī, but it is doubtful whether he adopted the title as a formal *laqab* before he declared himself publicly on 1 Rajab 145/25 September 762; he would not have needed an official nomenclature before that event. His correspondence quoted by al-Ṭabarī indicates unambiguously that he, at that time, used the appellation al-Mahdī as an official *laqab*, making him the first Muslim caliph to use such a title. Al-Manṣūr's adoption of a *laqab* was either a response to Muḥammad's, or inspired by his idea, and the use by al-Manṣūr's son of the appelation as an official title was certainly consequent upon his father's adoption of a *laqab*. If, as the coins indicate, Muḥammad b. al-Manṣūr was already called the Mahdī before he was allowed to adopt the appellation officially, the question becomes more ambiguous. If

one regards the appellation as the result of a self-conscious manoeuvres by Muḥammad's father or patron,[45] then it is easy to see it as a response to the belief that the ʿAlid Muḥammad was the Mahdī; but if the appelation arose spontaneously among the adherents of the Abbasid house, then who can say that the first person to state that Muḥammad son of the caliph Abū Jaʿfar was the Mahdī did so with the knowledge that others attributed that role to the ʿAlid Muḥammad? Perhaps it is best to say that adherents of both families, the Abbasids and the ʿAlids, had argued spontaneously that their 'Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh' was the Mahdī. It is impossible to see a precedent there, and even if the allegation was made first for the ʿAlid because he was older, it does not follow that the adherents of the Abbasid knew that and responded to it.

The Khurāsānī numismatic evidence also illuminates another episode of Khurāsānī enthusiasm. In 147/764–65, two years after al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī publicly adopted their *laqab*s for official use, al-Manṣūr began a campaign of persuasion and pressure to convince ʿĪsā b. Mūsā to give up his right of succession to the caliphate in favour of al-Mahdī.[46] One element in his campaign, according to one of the several accounts that al-Ṭabarī provides for the deposition of ʿĪsā, was to encourage the troops to cry out against ʿĪsā whenever he rode in public. When ʿĪsā complained, al-Manṣūr ordered the soldiers to stop, which they did for a while, but they would begin again and keep on.[47] This brief account serves al-Ṭabarī as an introduction to a long letter written by al-Manṣūr to ʿĪsā,[48] describing the divinely-inspired love for al-Mahdī that grew up in the hearts of the supporters (*anṣār*; further along these are identified as *anṣār min ahl Khurāsān*) of the dynasty. Al-Manṣūr's observation of this enthusiasm, he claims, convinced him that God had intervened irresistably, so that 'even if al-Mahdī were not recognized by the right of his ancestors, command would nevertheless pass to him; the strongest in this regard were the very closest of [my] entourage (*khāṣṣa*).' He describes his son as 'God fearing, blessed and rightly guided' (*taqiyyan mubārakan Mahdīyyan*) 'and a namesake of the Prophet.' God had done away with others who had exploited the same name (a reference to Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh the ʿAlid). ʿĪsā b. Mūsā responded to

these arguments with a defence of his right based on the irrevocable oaths of the Muslims, including al-Manṣūr himself. After this exchange of letters, the agitation of the troops resumed with more intensity. Al-Manṣūr apologized to ʿĪsā again, but warned him that the troops were on the verge of violence against him, which could be avoided only by ʿĪsā's resignation. In this particular account (of the several provided by al-Ṭabarī), ʿĪsā was finally persuaded by these arguments and resigned.[49] Presented as it is by al-Ṭabarī or his source, all this agitation among the troops sounds like trumped-up hypocrisy, like the 'spontaneous demonstrations' staged by modern dictatorships. The copper coins of Khurāsān show, however, that spontaneous extremist enthusiasm of the army for al-Mahdī existed there,[50] far beyond the reach of al-Manṣūr's manipulation, and if there, very plausibly also among the Khurāsānī troops in Iraq.

Table 14.2
Abbasid Copper Coins of Khurāsān to the End of al-Manṣūr's Reign

Date (AH)	Mint	Main Inscription	Remarks
130	Marw	*bism Allāh mimmā amara bihi Abū Muslim Amīr Āl Muḥammad*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan
131	Zaranj	Abū Muslim	'unique' in Tübingen
131	without mint name	*bism Allāh mimmā amara bihi Abū Muslim Amīr Āl Muḥammad*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan; fleurs-de-lys
[131 -32?]	Balkh	anonymous AE	*ahl al-bayt* slogan
132	without mint name	*bism Allāh mimmā amara bihi Abū Muslim*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan; margin terminates *sic.*
133	without mint name	*bism Allāh amara bihi al-Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan
133	without mint name	*bism Allāh mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr Zuhayr b. al-Turkī*	

Date (AH)	Mint	Main Inscription	Remarks
134	without mint name	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim	like 133
135	without mint name	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim	like 133
136	without mint name	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim	like 133
136	Sijistān	ʿImrān b. Ismāʿīl	*sittīn bi-dirham jā'iz bi-kull shay'*
137	without mint name	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim	like 133; date subject to confirmation
		Assassination of Abū Muslim, 23 Shaʿbān 137	
137	Gharshistān	dirhams with Umayyad inscriptions	probably from Jabal al-Fiḍḍa in Bādghīs.
138	Gharshistān	dirhams with Umayyad inscriptions	
138–40	[Sijistān]	Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh	*ahl al-bayt* [al-Kindī][51] slogan; same outlined epigraphy as previous Sijistān issue.
138	without mint name	*amara bihi al-Amīr Khālid*[52] *b. Ibrahīm*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan in reverse margin
139	without mint name	*amara bihi al-Khālid*[52] *b. Ibrahīm*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan in reverse margin
139	Marw	silver dirham, rarely attested for Khurāsān in this period.	
141	without mint name	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn akramahu Allāh*	*ʿalā yadayy Muʿādh* on obverse

Date (AH)	Mint	Main Inscription	Remarks
142	Balkh	*amara bihi al-Amīr al-Ḥasan b. Ḥumrān ʿabd iẓhārat daʿwat Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	The father's name Ḥumrān is clearly not Ḥamdān, as Ṭabarī III, 83. *iẓhāra* needs confirmation; it is more probably *iẓhār*.
142	Tirmidh	*mimmā amara bihi Ibrahīm b. Māhān ʿāmil al-Amīr al-Ḥasan b. Ḥumrān*	
142	without mint name	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr ʿalā yadayy Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Muʿādh Allāh*	(like 141 issue)
143	Nīsābūr		silver dirham, rarely attested for Khurāsān in this period.
143	Marw	*amara bihi al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh ʿalā yadayy ʿAbd al-Malik*	The official named is ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd.
143	Samarqand	*amara bihi al-Amīr Dāʾūd b. Karār fi wilayat Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn*	*ahl al-bayt* slogan in reverse field; father's name might be Garāz.
143	Bukhārā	*amara bihi al-Ashʿath fi wilayat al-Mahdī al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn*	
144	Samarqand	*amara bihi al-Ashʿath b. Yaḥyā fi wilayat al-Mahdī al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn*	
144	without mint name	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Muʾminīn akramahu Allāh*	
145	Balkh	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr*	

Date (AH)	Mint	Main Inscription	Remarks
		al-Ḥasan b. Ḥumrān [mawlā?] al-Amīr Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn ʿalā yadayy Yazīd b. Ḥumrān	
146	Herat	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr al-Mahdī Muḥammad aʿazza Allāh naṣrahu*	New benediction formula, observed only after 145.
147	Sijistān	*mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*	
147	Nīsābūr	*mimmā amara bihi Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh ʿAbdallāh Amīr al-Mu'minīn*	Ignores *laqab*s of both Manṣūr and Mahdī.
147	Herat	*mimmā amara Dā'ūd b. Karār ʿāmil al-Amīr al-Mahdī Muḥammad*	
148	Bukhārā	*amara bihi Maʿbad fī wilayat al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-Muslimīn b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*	Perhaps Maʿbad b. al-Khalīl, al-Ṭabarī III, 128
148	Jabal al-Fiḍḍa	*mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī bi-Jibāl al-Fiḍḍa*	
149	Balkh	*mimmā ād dāʿī al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-muslimīn Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn*	Only the last two letters of the governor's name have been read. The name might be Ziyād, Ḥammād or Muʿādh, etc.
149	al-Shāsh	obv.: *bism Allāh wilayat al-Mahdī sana...* rev.: *amara Saʿīd b. Yaḥyā ḍuriba al-Shāsh sittīn bi-dirham*	
150	'Samarqand'	silver dirham issue with *mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Mu'minīn* as at Rayy.	A later imitation, probably Khazar
132	Bādghīs	*...[Zu]hayr ʿāmil al-Amīr*	Plausibly Zuhayr

Date (AH)	Mint	Main Inscription	Remarks
–150		*Ḥasan…*	b. al-Turkī of 133.
151	Bukhārā	*amara bihi al-Junayd b. Khalid ʿāmil al-imām al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-muslimīn*	Khalid sic; cf. for Khālid, sic, above; Junayd, al-Ṭabarī, III, p.128.
152	Ṭāliqān	anonymous	
153	Samarqand	obv. mrg. *mimmā amara bihi Hamza b. ʿAmr fi wilayat al-Amīr Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba* rev. mrg. *…bi-Samarqand fi wilayat al-Mahdī sana…*	
153?	Marw	*bism Allāh mimmā amara bihi al-Mahdī(?) … khamsīn wa-miʾa*	
155	Jabal al-Fiḍḍa	*mimmā amara bihi Rawḥ ʿāmil ʿAbbād mawlā al-Mahdī*	
155	Marw Rūd	*mimmā amara bihi Mālik b. Ḥammād ʿāmil al-Amīr Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba*	
155	Marw	*mimmā amara bihi al-Amīr Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba ʿāmil al-Mahdī akramahu Allāh*	
156	Nīsābūr	*Allāh aḥad Allāh al-ṣamad lam yalid wa-lam yūlad wa-lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad*	Umayyad reverse formula
date?	Sijistān	with later secondary stamp *Tamīm b. ʿUmar*	Identified as Tamīm b. Sijishāh ʿUmar al-Taymī, 133–156.
159	without mint name	*mimmā amara bihi Yaʿqūb b. Suwār*	ʿMahdī' on obverse
160	Bukhārā	obv. ctr. *baraka li-Mūsā walī ʿahd al-muslimīn* rev. mrg. *mimmā amara bihi ʿAbdūh b. Qudayd ʿāmil ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd*	Musa became al-Hādī.

Citations of Coins Mentioned in the Text and Tables

The coins are listed by mint and date. In general, only the most convenient reference is cited; additional citations are given for rare coins, or to indicate a useful discussion of the issue. The coins are listed by mint, alphabetically (ignoring 'al-'), and by date. Issues unattributable to a mint are at the end.

Abbreviations:

AE	bronze or copper (*fals*)
Album, *Checklist*	Stephen Album. *A Checklist of Islamic Coins.* 2nd edition; Santa Rosa, CA, 1998.
Album, 'Overview'	Stephen Album, 'An Overview of the Coinage of Sistan: I. Before the Mongols,' *Yarmouk Numismatics,* 10 (1998), pp.11–30.
ANS	Collection of the American Numismatic Society
AR	silver (*dirham*)
Berlin	[H. Nützel] *Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Katalog der orientalischen Münzen*, I: *Die Münzen der östlichen Chalifen.* Berlin, 1898.
BMCOr	Stanley Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*: Vol.IX: *Additions to the Oriental Collection, 1876–1888. Part I: Additions to Vols I–IV.* London, 1889.
Curiel, 'Sur quelques'	Curiel, R. 'Sur quelques monnaies des gouverneurs ʿabbāsides du Tabaristān,' in P. Gignoux, ed. *Pad nām ī yazdān. Études d'épigraphie de numismatique et d'histoire de l'Iran Ancien.* Paris, 1979, pp.151–158.
Drohiczyna	Maria Czapkiewicz and Franciszek Kmietowicz. *Skarb monet arabskich z okolic Drohiczyna nad Bugiem.* (Polska Akademia Nauk, Oddział w Krakowie; Prace Komissi archeologicznej, Nr. 1; Cracow, 1960).
Ernazarova	'Denezhnoye obrashscheniye Camarkanda po arkheologo-numizmaticheskim dannim

	(do nachala IX v.),' *Afrasiab* 3 (1974), pp.155–237.
Ilisch, *Jahresbericht* 1999	Lutz Ilisch, Orientalisches Seminar der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik. Münzsammlung der Universität Tübingen: Orientalische Münzen. *Jahresbericht 1999*. Tübingen, 2000.
Lavoix	Henri Lavoix, *Catalogue des monnaies musulmanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Khalifes orientaux*. Paris, 1887.
Miles, *Rayy*	George C. Miles, *The Numismatic History of Rayy*. New York, 1938.
Miles, *RIC*	George C. Miles, *Rare Islamic Coins*. New York, 1950.
Mrg.	margin of the coin, i.e. the outer circular inscriptions or decorations.
Nekrasova	E.G. Nekrasova, 'Noviye danniye o mednoi monetnoi chekanke v srednei azii VIII-nachala IX v.,' in *Arkheologiya, numizmatika i epigraphika srednevekovoi srednei asii* (Samarqand, 2000), pp.104–110.
Nicol	Norman D. Nicol, Rāfat el-Nabarawy and Jere L. Bacharach. *Catalog of the Islamic Coins, Glass Weights, Dies and Medals in the Egyptian National Library, Cairo*. American Research Center in Egypt / Catalogs. Malibu, CA, 1982.
Obv.	obverse or face of the coin
Porter	Harvey Porter, 'Unpublished Coins of the Caliphate,' *Numismatic Chronicle,* series 5 (1921), pp. 317-332.
Rev.	reverse or back of the coin
Shamma	Samir Shamma. *A Catalogue of Abbasid Copper Coins*. Al-Rafid: the author, 1998.
Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*	O.I. Smirnova, *Katalog monet s goroditsa Pendzhikent (Materiali 1949–1956 gg.)*. Moscow, 1963.

Smirnova, *Svodnii*	O.I. Smirnova. *Svodnii katalog sogdiiskikh monet: Bronza.* Moscow, 1981.
SNAT	Florian Schwarz, *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen XIVc: Khurāsān III: Die Münzstätten am Oberlauf des Oxus.* Tübingen, 2002.
Tiesenhausen	V. Tiesenhausen, *Monety vostochnavo chalifata.* St. Petersburg, 1873; repr. London, 1989.
Tübingen	Collection of the Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Orientalisches Seminar der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen
Wurtzel	Carl Wurtzel, 'The Coinage of the Revolutionaries in the Late Umayyad Period,' *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes,* 23 (1978), pp.161-199.
Zambaur, 'Contributions'	E. von Zambaur, 'Contributions à la numismatique orientale: Monnaies inédites ou rares des dynasties musulmanes de la collection de l'auteur,' *Numismatische Zeitschrift,* 36 (1904), pp. 43–133.
Zambaur, 'Neue'	Eduard Zambaur, 'A Neue Khalifenmünzen,' *Numismatische Zeitschrift,* 55 (1922), pp.1–16.

Bādghīs mint

Date illegible	AE with Zuhayr: Tübingen 98–9–5 = Ilisch, *Jahresbericht* 1999, p.6 no.1.

Balkh mint

116	AR: Tübingen 94–33–1, SNAT 6766. *Ca.* 132 (undated, or date illegible): George C. Miles, 'Some Islamic Coins in the Berne Historical Museum,' *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau,* 45 (1966), p.133, no.7.
142	AE with al-Ḥasan: Tübingen AL_4 A4, SNAT 6777; AL_4 A5, SNAT 6778.
145	AE with al-Ḥasan and Yazīd: ANS 1997.111.3; Tübingen 97–6–2.

149 AE with *...ā dāʿī al-Mahdī walī ʿahd al-muslim*:[53] Tübingen 2000–1–4, 2000–11–21; Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*, 911–915.

Baṣra mint

145 AR with Salm: Tiesenhausen 741 and ANS 1930.168.7.
146 AR with Salm: BMCOr I, p.43 no.42.

Bukhārā mint

143 AE ANS 1917.215.65; Tübingen AL5 B4, AL5 B5. Berlin 2076, pl. VI, illustrating reverse only.
148 AE with Maʿbad: ANS 1940.125.1; Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*, 903–909.
151 AE with Junayd: ANS 1917.215.66; ANS 0000.999.305; Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*, 916–928.
160 AE ANS 1917.216.38 = Miles, *RIC* 366; Nekrasova pp.107–108.

Gharshistān mint

137 AR British Museum O. Codrington, 'Oriental Coins,' *Numismatic Chronicle* 3rd Series, 14 (1894), p.88. O. Codrington, 'Some Rare Oriental Coins,' *Numismatic Chronicle* 4th Series, 2 (1902), Pl. XII # 7; two others.
138 AR private collection (perhaps two).

Herat mint

146 AE with al-Mahdī Muḥammad: Tübingen AL7 A2.
147 AE with Dā'ūd b. Karār: Tübingen AL7 A3, AL7 A4.

Jabal al-Fiḍḍa mint[54]

148 AE with al-Mahdī: Brian Hannon, *Glimpses of History* (Felton, CA, 1992), unpaged, sub anno 765; see Ilisch, *Jahresbericht* 1999, p.6.
155 AE with Rawḥ: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Shamma collection (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford); Tübingen; private collections (none published as yet; 6 known in all).

Marw mint

127 AR with al-Kirmānī: I. Artuk, 'Bazı önemli sikkeler,' *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresı, III. seksiyon* (Ankara, 1982), 797–98 (and 3 others).

128 AR with al-Kirmānī: Wurtzel 30 (and 4 others).

130 AE with Abū Muslim: Tübingen AE_4 C6, unique.

131 AE with Abū Muslim: Tübingen AE_4 D_5, unique.

139 AR: Berlin p.373 no.710a; several others.

143 AE with 'Abd al-Malik: Zambaur, 'Contributions,' p.64 [22 of offprint], no.44.

153? AE with al-Mahdī: Tübingen AM2 A_4. Both the date and the name on this unique coin are dubious and remain to be confirmed.

155 AE with Ḥumayd: AE V. Tiesenhausen, 'Numizmaticheskiya novinki,' *Zapisok Vostochnavo Otdeleniya, Imperatorskavo Russkavo Archeologicheskavo Obshchestva* 6 (1891), 229–64 (separate publication paged 1–36), p.5 no.7; Tübingen 97–10–60, 98–19–5 (Ilisch, *Jahresbericht* 1999, no.6); Nekrasova p.107.

Marw al-Rūdh mint

155 AE with Malik and Ḥumayd: Tübingen, Ilisch, *Jahresberichte* 1999, p.8 no.5. The actual mint name on the coin is Marūdh.

Nīsābūr mint

143 AR: Tübingen AE8 F_4, unique.

147 AE with Muḥammad: Shamma, p.319 no.1.

156 AE anonymous with Umayyad reverse formula: Lavoix 1637.

Rayy mint

138 AE: Miles, *Rayy*, 41.

139 AE: Miles, *Rayy*, 42.

141 AE: Miles, *Rayy*, 43A-43B. In a handwritten note in his copy of *Rayy*, Miles suggests that the correct reading of the 'āmil's father's name is Yaḥyā, not Ja'far.

143 AE with Aṣghar: Miles, *Rayy*, 44A.

143 AE with 'Imrān: Miles, *Rayy*, 44B.

144 AE: Miles, *Rayy*, 45.
145 AE with Salm: Miles, *Rayy*, 47D; British Museum 1979.9.25.1.
145 AR anonymous: Miles, *Rayy*, 47A; Tübingen AE8 F5; London private collection, recently recorded.
145 AR with al-Mahdī: Miles, *Rayy*, 47B; ANS 1958.222.10.
145 AE with al-Mahdī: Miles, *Rayy*, 47C = Nicol, 155 (both record the same specimen, which has never been illustrated).

Samarqand mint

143 AE with Dā'ūd: AE Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*, nos. 799–814; AE Berlin p.377 no.2095a; AE Smirnova, *Svodnii*, nos. 1682–83.
144 AE with al-Ashʿath: Tübingen 96–30–1 = SNAT 5720; Ernazarova, nos. 168–80.
150 AR with al-Mahdī (imitation): Tiesenhausen 793; AR *Drohiczyna* 107; Bykov, 'Khazarskom,' p.28 no.3 and fig.2.
153 AE with Hamza, Humayd, and al-Mahdī: Smirnova, *Pendzhikent*, 929–963.

al-Shāsh mint

149 AE James A. Farr and Vladimir N. Nastich, 'An Unrecorded 'Abbasid Fals of al-Shash, AH 149, in the Name of al-Mahdī,' *Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter* 168 (Summer 2001), 12–14; Nekrasova, 107.

Sijistān and Zaranj mints

131 Sijistān AE with Abū Muslim: Tübingen 98–10–4 = Album, 'Overview,' p.13.
136 Sijistān AE with ʿImrān: Album, *Checklist*, A-B209; Wurtzel 47.
138–40 [Sijistān] AE with Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh: Album fixed-price list 126 no.78 illus.; Tübingen 96–7–3.
147 Sijistān AE with al-Mahdī: BM; Tübingen 94–17–3, 94–17–4; Shamma, p.289.
151 Sijistān AE with al-Mahdī: ANS 1921.54.2; Tübingen 95–28–3, 96–16–1.
Date effaced Sijistān AE with Tamīm b. ʿUmar counterstamp: Tübingen 95 28–2.

Ṭabaristān mint

146 AR with al-Mahdī: American University in Beirut collection = Porter,' p.318 = Zambaur, 'Neue,' p.5.

147 AR with al-Mahdī: *BMCOr* IX, p.43, no.56d, pl. IV obv. = Curiel, 'Sur quelques,' p.153 n.2; with letters R W Ḥ in the margin, for Rawḥ b. Ḥātim (2 others known).

148 AR with al-Mahdī: BM acquired 1922 = Curiel, 'Sur quelques,' p.153 n.2 (1 other known). Also with R W Ḥ.

Ṭāliqān mint

152 AE anonymous: Tübingen 98–9–6 Ilisch, *Jahresbericht* 1999 no.2. On this issue, the mint name is written without *alif*s.

Tirmidh mint

142 AE Nekrasova, 106–107: Tübingen 98–9–135.

Without mint name

131 AE with Abū Muslim: Wurtzel 36 (8 examples).

132 AE with Abū Muslim: Wurtzel 37 (2 examples).

133 AE with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim: Wurtzel 38 (4 examples).

133 AE with Zuhayr: ANS 1965.143.1 = Wurtzel 45.

134 AE with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: Wurtzel 39 (1 example).

135 AE with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: Wurtzel 40 (2 examples).

136 AE with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: Wurtzel 41 (1 example; also Tübingen AE4 E1).

137 AE with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: Tübingen 92–20–1.

138 AE with Khālid b. Ibrāhīm: Wurtzel 46.

141 AE with Muḥammad: Peus 29–31/10/1997, no.890.

142 AE with Muḥammad: V. Tiesenhausen, 'Noviya numizmatischskiya priobryeteniya N.P. Linevicha, *Zapisok Vostochnavo Otdeleniya, Imperatorskavo Russkavo Archeologicheskavo Obshchestva* 10 (1895), 225–226 no.3 (there are three others, including ANS 1917.215.63).

144 AE with Muḥammad: Lavoix 1598; Zambaur, 'Contributions,' 45.

159 AE with Yaʿqūb and 'Mahdī': Tübingen 91–16–12.

Notes

1. This article was originally delivered as a paper in a panel, 'On the Edge? Khurāsān and the Caliphate,' at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in 1997.

2. Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, 1986), assemble a mass of evidence for the designations of the early caliphs.

3. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, pp.6–11, 13–15, show, for example, the universality of the attribute *khalīfat Allāh*. *Imām* is shown to be an attribute of the Umayyads, pp.34–37, and of the Abbasids, p.80. Nearly all the citations, however, are from rhetoric and poetry, not from official nomenclature. In the terminology to be used here, they are epithets that are so generally used as to show the existence of attributes, but they are not 'official titles' (cf. p.11). The very rare uses of these two terms in an official context are exceptional and anomalous even for the three caliphs who employ them. *Al-Khalīfa* by itself, however, becomes a standard titulature starting with al-Mahdī.

4. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901; reprint 1965), III, p.30. The phrase follows immediately upon his statement ordering an increase in the stipends of his auditors, so that the term, literally 'the spiller,' was presumably used with the sense 'the generous one, who pours out benefits.' An early poet, Ḥafṣ b. Nu'mān, is alleged to have called Abu'l-'Abbās *saffāḥ āl al-rasūl*, 'the spiller of the family of the Prophet,' that is, the member of the family who spilled the blood of the Umayyads, but this verse in fact refers to the uncle of Abu'l-'Abbās, the governor of Syria who massacred the Umayyads – a person who surely had no official *laqab*; see Farouk Omar, 'A Note on the *laqab*s (i.e. epithet) of the Early 'Abbasid caliphs,' in his *'Abbāsiyyāt: Studies in the History of the Early 'Abbāsids* (Baghdad, 1976), pp.141–142; Omar's discussion seems to be intended to cast doubt on Abu'l-'Abbās' use of the term, while not explicitly contradicting the authoritative modern historians who say he did use it. Most of the early historians consistently refer to him by his *kunya*. Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1866), p.209, is the first one to refer to Abu'l-'Abbās as al-Saffāh. Al-Ṣūlī, *Kitāb al-awrāq fi akhbār Āl al-'Abbās wa-ash'ārihim*, ed. and Russian tr. V.I. Belyaev and A.B. Khalidov (St. Petersburg, 1998), p.558, also uses the title, as does his younger contemporary al-Mas'ūdī, writing in 345/956–57 (*Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje; Leiden, 1894; reprint 1967, p.338; also pp.166,

327, 330, 337. Al-Masʿūdī adds that Abu'l-ʿAbbās used the *laqab* al-Mahdī at first (*Tanbīh*, p.338), but there is no other prior evidence for his official use of that appellation. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, in his introduction to the biography of Abu'l-ʿAbbās (*Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, Cairo and Baghdad, 1931, vol.10, p.46), includes al-Saffāḥ in his official nomenclature, and states that he was also called al-Murtaḍā and al-Qā'im, but further (p.47), the source for these appelations turns out to be a report of Ibn al-Barā' (on whom see Akram Ḍiyā' al-ʿUmarī, *Mawārid al-khaṭīb al-Baghdādī fī ta'rīkh Baghdād* (Damascus and Beirut, 1975), pp.162–163, and *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, vol.1, p.281) giving Abu'l-ʿAbbās' *nisba*, in which every one of his ancestors (none of whom was caliph) is assigned a parallel *laqab*. This sort of late evidence, from an epoch in which it was already assumed by most writers that every caliph had a *laqab*, is no evidence at all. Finally, despite the fact that messianic resonance is found today in the term al-Saffāḥ, that resonance surely arose later, as a result of the attribution of the *laqab* to the first Abbasid caliph. The evidence indicates that his single rhetorical application of the term to himself had quite a different significance. See Bernard Lewis, 'The Regnal Titles of the First Abbasid Caliphs,' in Tara Chand, ed. *Dr. Zakir Husain Presentation Volume* (New Delhi, 1968), pp.15–16. It is remarkable that Lewis, having correctly pointed out that Abu'l-ʿAbbās had no title (and having listed only the generic title *al-imām* for Abu'l-ʿAbbās' predecessor, his brother Ibrāhīm), should nevertheless conclude at the end of his article that 'the first five leaders of the Abbasid cause ... all have titles of messianic import'; a victory of philological theory over historical fact.

5. Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rāḍī bi'llāh wa'l-Muttaqī bi'llāh*, ed. J. Heyworth Dunne (Cairo, 1935), pp.1–4; tr. Marius Canard, (Algiers, 1946-50), vol.1, pp.49-52; David J. Wasserstein, 'Ibn Ḥazm on Names Meet for Caliphs: The Textual History of a Medieval Arabic Onomastic Catalogue and the Transmission of Knowledge in Classical Islam,' in *Cahiers d'onomastique Arabe 1988–1992* (Paris, 1993), pp.61–62. The name expected by al-Ṣūlī (who was al-Rāḍī's tutor) was rejected, because it had been previously used, or at least al-Rāḍī thought so. No positive reason for the choice of 'al-Rāḍī' is offered.

6. Al-Muʿtaṣim: Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (Cairo, 1369/1950), vol.3, p.295. Al-Mutawakkil: al-Ṭabarī, III, p.1370. For al-Mutawakkil, al-Ṭabarī and other historians also provide a more realistic alternative account, but still without any indication why the name al-Mutawakkil was selected rather than some other (al-Ṭabarī, III, p.1369; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, p.552, from Abu'l-

'Aynā', probably the source for all these accounts; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, vol.7, p.165).

7. Ibn Ḥazm's text discussed by Wasserstein, 'Names,' is merely a list with no analytical discussion.

8. The classic study is by Bernard Lewis, 'Regnal Titles.' Equally important are the articles of Farouk Omar, 'A Note'; his 'Politics and the Problem of Succession in the Early Abbasid Period, 132/750–158/775,' in his *'Abbāsiyyāt*, pp.61–75, and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Routinization of Revolutionary Charisma: Notes on the 'Abbāsid Caliphs al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī,' *Islamic Studies*, 29 (1990), pp.251–275. Jere L. Bacharach, '*Laqab* for a Future Caliph: The Case of the Abbasid al-Mahdi,' *JAOS*, 113 (1993), pp.271–274, is an exception to the statement above, being based on the textual and numismatic evidence for actual events.

9. Farouk Omar, 'A Note,' p.142, is the only author to cite al-Mas'ūdī's passage. Wilferd Madelung, 'al-Mahdī,' *EI2*, and N. Lowick, 'Une monnaie 'Alide d'al-Baṣrah datée de 145 H (762–3 après J.-C.),' *Revue Numismatique*, 6 Série, 21 (1979), pp.218–224, also state that al-Manṣūr took his *laqab* after his victory, without citing a source.

10. Al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh*, p.341.

11. The phrase 'he took the laqab' translates the verb *laqqaba*.

12. The use of this war-cry has often been taken as an explicit reference to the Manṣūr as apocalyptic figure, or as evidence that the *fulān* referred to in any particular context used the appellation al-Manṣūr or claimed the status of the Manṣūr. It was, rather, merely a generic idiomatic war-cry, still used in 251/866: al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma (Leiden, 1883), vol.2, p.604; al-Ṭabarī, III, p.1579.

13. Cf. Omar, 'A Note,' 143. In addition to Lewis, 'Regnal Titles,' pp.16–17, and Omar, pp.142–144, there is also a useful summary on the Manṣūr in Wilferd Madelung, 'Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age,' *JSS*, 31 (1986), pp.156–158. The pre-Islamic and early Islamic Yemenis used the term for an expected restorer, but it is not therefore evident that the Abbasids and other Muslims of the second half of the 2nd/8th century thought of the term as peculiarly South Arabian, a connection that modern Islamicists like to bring out (Omar, p.142). An interesting and unique dirham in the collection of Tübingen University, issued in Balkh, 116 Hijra, has the marginal inscription *amara Allāh/ bi'l-'adl/ li-Manṣūr*. The coin was evidently issued under the authority of the Murji'a rebel al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, who took the town in that year (al-Ṭabarī, II, pp.1566–1568). *'Adl*, 'justice,' was one of the watch-

words of his movement, but nothing previously known connects him with the Manṣūr. The dirham seems to indicate that he considered himself either the Manṣūr or the predecessor of the apocalyptic figure.

14. A monumental inscription in Ādharbayjān naming ʿAbdallāh al-Manṣūr Amīr al-Mu'minīn is listed in the *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie Arabe*, ed. Étienne Combe et al. (Cairo, 1931–), vol.1, pp.33–34, no.43, but its source, rather than an intrepid modern epigrapher, is al-Jahshiyārī, a 3rd/9th-century writer, quoting a *muḥaddith* who saw it; *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa'l-kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā', Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalabī (Cairo, 1938), p.80. Coins and glass weights naming ʿAbdallāh as caliph, from the era before his adoption of a *laqab*, are known; for example the coppers of Rayy in 139 and 141 (below) and the glass weights in A.H. Morton, *A Catalogue of Early Islamic Glass Stamps in the British Museum* (London, 1985), pp.89–94.

15. Al-Ṭabarī, III, pp.208–209. See al-Ṭabarī, III, p.195, and al-Masʿūdī, *al-Tanbīh*, p.341, for the date of Muḥammad's open revolt, the *terminus post quem*.

16. The only original inscription of al-Manṣūr in *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie Arabe*, vol.1, p.32, no.41, has precisely the same nomenclature. It is on an ivory box made in Aden that can be dated 145–46/762–764 because it names the governor of Arabia in those years, al-Amīr ʿAbdallāh b. al-Rabīʿ. The box was evidently engraved before al-Manṣūr had his title, or before the news of his new title reached Aden. Dr Marilyn Jenkins drew my attention to this inscription by an inquiry. Another piece of evidence from before al-Manṣūr had his title is the name given to his new city, Baghdad, 'Madīnat Abū Jaʿfar,' instead of 'Madīnat al-Manṣūr' (al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1892), p.238, and al-Ṭabarī, III, p.906 [using the name in 198 H], both cited by Alistair Northedge, 'Archaeology and New Urban Settlement in Early Islamic Syria and Iraq,' in G.R.D. King and Averil Cameron, ed. *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, II: Land Use and Settlement Patterns* (Princeton, 1994), p.246.

17. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.209.

18. The title is also mentioned in poetry al-Ṭabarī, III, p.255; al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p.341, states he took the name al-Mahdī. Muḥammad was hailed in Madīna as the Mahdī much earlier, ca. 140/757 (al-Ṭabarī, III, p.158; date, al-Ṭabarī, III, pp.153–154), but there is no indication that he took the designation at that time as an official throne name.

19. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.215.

20. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.338. A later document quoted by al-Ṭabarī, vol.3,

pp.453–454, has the nomenclature from ʿAbdallāh al-Manṣūr Amīr al-Muʾminīn to the Banū Hāshim, etc. Although it is stated (al-Ṭabarī, III, p.455) that this letter was a political concoction, the nomenclature would nevertheless have to be correct for its epoch.

21. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.341.

22. Al-Ṭabarī, III, pp.133–136; al-Jahshiyārī, pp.126–127.

23. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.796, lists all the districts of Jibāl: 'Nahāwand, Hamadhān, Qumm, Iṣfahān [written *sic*, with *fā'*].' Rayy is omitted, presumably because it was regarded as part of Khurāsān at that time (195/810).

24. The statements about existing specimens here and below are based on the author's files which have been compiled over many years (and incorporate those of Miles). It would be no surprise if more examples exist, unpublicized, but the rarity and proportional survival rates are probably correct. For precise citations, see the catalogue of coins at the end of this article.

25. Most major collections and catalogues have at least one example. Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London, 1981), p.91, notes the numismatic evidence for al-Mahdī's receipt of his title in this year, citing George C. Miles, *The Numismatic History of Rayy* (New York, 1938), p.26.

26. Official names were a standard feature of the previous silver coinage that continued the Sasanian tradition, but were omitted from the standard Islamic coinage introduced by ʿAbd al-Malik in 78/697 and 80/699. Some governors had begun to be represented on coins by initials or abbreviations in the first years of al-Manṣūr's reign. Technically, the Khurāsānī rebel al-Kirmānī is the first to name himself on Islamic silver coins, at Marw in 127 and 128/744–46; see the catalogue of coins below.

27. Bacharach, *Laqab*, pp.271–274, especially p.273.

28. If al-Manṣūr adopted his title immediately after his victory, al-Mahdī would have begun using his at least a week or more later because of the time it took to carry the news from Iraq to Rayy.

29. Al-Ṭabarī, III, pp.305, 319. Salm also was allowed to place his name on dirhams of his capital Basra, in the form 'Salm' below the customary reverse inscriptions. He was the first governor to be named on dirhams since the abolition of the Arab-Sasanian coinage about sixty years earlier.

30. As a parallel, the Fatimid caliph al-Manṣūr bi'llāh also took his title, with the same meaning as al-Manṣūr's, more than a year after his succession, after his victory over the Khārijī Abū Yazīd who had threat-

ened the survival of the dynasty; see F. Dachraoui, 'al-Manṣūr bi'llāh,' *EI2*, vol.6, pp.434–435.

31. The Christian historian Agapius, *Kitāb al-ʿunwān*, ed. with French tr. A. Vasiliev, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol.8 (1911), p.544, mentions al-Mahdī's appointment as successor in al-Manṣūr's ninth year, as if he were not successor before. Al-Jahshiyārī, pp.126–127, dates an incident of the change in succession to 146/763–764, but there is no evidence that would justify repudiation of al-Ṭabarī's date.

32. Bacharach, '*Laqab*,' reaches the same conclusion with different arguments.

33. The coins of Rayy have the mint name al-Rayy, 146–148 AH, and the name al-Muḥammadiyya from 148 to 155 AH. The latter was the name of a new cantonment built for al-Mahdī adjacent to the old city. See Miles, *The Numismatic History of Rayy*, pp.28–37, for these dirhams. Similar dirhams have been attributed to Samarqand, 150 AH, but A.A. Bykov, 'O khazarskom chekane VII–IX vv.,' *Trudi Gosudarstvennovo Ermitazha,* 12 (1971), pp.26–36, English summary, pp.193–194, shows them to be imitations, probably Khazar, with the false date 108, not 150. There were eight examples in the hoard he describes, his Type II, as well as other imitative silver coins, including some with the mint name al-Muḥammadiyya.

34. Al-Mahdī is named with Bakkār in 152 and 153 AH, although al-Ṭabarī, III, p.371, states that Bakkār b. Muslim was not appointed governor until 153. In 154 and 155 al-Mahdī is named with al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba.

35. Kh. A. Mushegian, *Denezhnoe obrashchenie dvina po numizmaticheskim dannim* (Erevan, 1962); Khatchatur Mousheghian et al., *History and Coin Finds in Armenia: Coins from Duin, Capital of Armenia (4–13th c.); Inventory of Byzantine and Sasanian Coins in Armenia (6–7th c.)* (Wetteren, 2000); includes a numismatic history of Armenia under the Muslims and many translated excerpts from the Armenian historians; Aram Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, tr. Nina G. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1976); E.A. Pakhomov, *Monety Azerbaidzhana* (Baku, 1959-63); E.A. Pakhomov, *Monety Gruzi* (Tbilisi, 1970); David M. Lang, *Studies in the Numismatic History of Georgia in Transcaucasia* (New York, 1955); D.G. Kapanadze, *Gruzinskaya Numizmatika* (Moscow, 1955).

36. O.I. Smirnova, *Katalog monet s goroditsa Pendzhikent (Materiali 1949–1956 gg.)* (Moscow, 1963), and her *Svodnī katalog sogdīskikh monet: bronza* (Moscow, 1981); E.G. Nekrasova, 'Noviye danniye o mednoi monetnoi

chekanke v srednei azii VIII-nachala IX v.,' in *Arkheologiya, numizmatika i epigraphika srednevekovoi srednei azii* (Samarqand, 2000), pp.104–110.

37. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.128. He is there named al-Junayd b. Khālid b. Huraym al-Taghlibī.

38. The father's name on the coins is Ḥumrān and clearly not Ḥamdān, as found in the Leiden text of al-Ṭabarī, III, p.83; cf. the Cairo edition (ed. Muhammad Ibrahim; Cairo, 1960–69), vol.7, p.467.

39. *Qul lā as'alukum ʿalayhi ajran illā al-mawadda fi al-qurbā*, 'Say: I do not ask of you for it any recompense except love of kin' (Qur'ān 42: 23). The 'kin,' *al-qurbā*, were taken to be the relatives of the Prophet, the *ahl al-bayt* or 'people of the house.'

40. Al-Ṭabarī, III, pp.119–120; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawāhir*, ed. and French tr. C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille as *Les prairies d'or* (Paris, 1861–77), vol.6, pp.188–189.

41. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.128; but the episode is quite unclear.

42. His identification as the Mahdī is the subject of a subchapter by Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn,* ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1368/1949), pp.237–245. However, al- Iṣfahānī's following subchapter, even longer, is devoted to those who denied that he was the Mahdī and identified him instead as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, *Maqātil*, pp.245–257.

43. Al- Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, pp.233, 238, 245.

44. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.143; al- Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, pp.205–209, 233.

45. Omar, 'Politics and the Problem of Succession,' pp.65–66, describes some of the ways that the identification of Muḥammad as al-Mahdī was promulgated, through public proclamation, poetry, and the like, but precise dates for any incident are lacking. Furthermore, these public incidents cannot tell us whether and when people began saying privately that Muḥammad was the Mahdī. Given the prevalence of the idea that the Mahdī would have the same name as the Prophet, it is likely that any high-born son with that name in a charismatic family might speculatively be identified as the Mahdī by fond attendants and others. Zaman, 'Routinization,' pp.253 *et passim*, also takes it for granted that al-Manṣūr's adoption of titles for himself and his son was a self-conscious, presumably insincere, political manoeuvre, in response to genuine spontaneous popular enthusiasm for ʿAlid claims. None of the discussion of these titles has ever considered the possibility that al-Manṣūr sincerely believed that he might himself be the Manṣūr, and his son the Mahdī, and still less that anyone else might possibly have sincerely and independently regarded them as the embodiment of these figures. The modern tradition seems uniformly to regard Abbasid claims as

propagandistic and manipulative, while, for the most part, the messianic identifications of ʿAlids are seen as the result of spontaneous popular enthusiasm.

46. The episode is recounted and discussed by Anwar G. Chejne, *Succession to the Rule in Islam with Special Reference to the Early ʿAbbasid Period* (Lahore, 1960), pp.81–86, and in part by Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of ʿAbbāsid Rule* (Princeton, 1980), pp.39–57.

47. Al-Ṭabarī, III, p.338. No source is named for this account.

48. Ibid., III, p.338–341.

49. Ibid., III, p.344–345.

50. Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, p.91, suggests that the favour al-Mahdī enjoyed among the Khurāsānis in Khurāsān was built up by personal contacts during his governorate there. Doubtless the charisma of his name and lineage worked together with careful diplomacy by him and his advisors to maximize his support.

51. Sulaymān governed for Khālid of Khurāsān; see C. Edmund Bosworth, *Sīstān under the Arabs, from the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Ṣaffārids (30–250/651–864)* (Rome, 1968), pp.80–81.

52. In the transliteration of the inscriptions, the long *a* has been shown as *ā* only when it is shown on the coin by *alif*. *Alif* was still optional in many words. For example, the coins bear the name Khālid and Khalid: the same name, on one issue with *alif* and on another, later, issue, without *alif*. *Wilāya* is always written *wilaya*, without alif.

53. The inscription was recently deciphered by Stephen Album. The nomenclature *dāʿī al-Mahdī* is one more indication that al-Mahdī was a charismatic figure on whose behalf a revolutionary religious summons could be issued. Discovery of more examples of this issue will probably enable the governor's name to be read.

54. The Jabal al-Fiḍḍa, 'Mountain of Silver,' of these coins was the one in Bādghīs province, mentioned by al-Idrīsī, *Kitāb nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*, ed. E. Cerulli et al. (Naples and Rome, 1970–84), vol.4, p.474, as indicated by al-Mahdī's name on the coins.

15

Shāhānshāh and *al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad*: The Legitimation of Power in Sāmānid and Būyid Iran

Luke Treadwell

Among Wilferd Madelung's many contributions to the field of medieval Islamic studies lies a substantial collection of papers which deals with the history of the Būyids and other Iranian dynasties of the 4th/10th century.[1] With characteristic thoroughness and an unsurpassed ability to apply a keen historical imagination to intractable texts, Madelung brings to life one of the darker corners of the history of the successor states. The centrepiece of this group of studies explores the question of the Būyids' use of royal and imperial titulature. As a supplement to Wilferd Madelung's work on the subject, this paper offers an analysis of hitherto neglected data relating to the numismatic titulature of their great rivals for control of Eastern Iran, the Sāmānids. Two topics will be considered below: the earliest appearance of the term *malik* (King), during the reign of Nūḥ b. Naṣr (331–343/943–954), and its subsequent employment by Nūḥ's successors; and the occurrence of the title *shāhānshāh* (King of Kings) on a medallion cast in Bukhārā during the reign of Nūḥ's son, Manṣūr (350–365/961–976). The

coins which bear these titles can contribute substantially to our understanding of the manipulation of notions of dynastic authority in 4th/10th-century Iran and to their importance in the struggle for hegemony between the two dynasties. However, as this paper tries to suggest, coins can only yield their full benefit to the historian if they are interpreted, not as disembodied and decontextualized objects, but in the light of the narrative provided by contemporary historians. It is with this narrative that we begin.

When Nūḥ came to the throne in 331/943, the Sāmānid court was enduring a grave crisis which had caused turmoil within the political elite of Bukhārā. In the last years of his life, Nūḥ's father, Naṣr b. Aḥmad, had converted to Ismailism at the hands of the missionaries of the eastern *daʿwa*, sparking a backlash which led to the death of his vizier, Abu'l-Ṭayyib al-Muṣʿabī, and several senior officers of state.[2] Two years after his accession, Nūḥ launched a purge of the Ismaili *daʿwa*, putting to death the leader of the mission, al-Nasafī, as well as many converts. Although the *daʿwa* never repeated the success it had briefly enjoyed under Naṣr, the *amīr*'s conversion changed the political landscape of the Sāmānid Mashriq forever. From now on, the fear of Ismaili influence at the highest levels of the state was ever present and no-one, not even the most powerful member of the court, was immune to the charge of harbouring Ismaili sympathies, however far-fetched the accusation might be. In an attempt to calm the atmosphere of suspicion, Nūḥ took the unprecedented step of appointing to the vizierate his former tutor in *fiqh,* the famous Ḥanafī scholar and erstwhile *qāḍī* of Bukhārā, Abu'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sulamī, known as *al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl*.[3] Al-Sulamī was a very different person to the urbane Jayhānīs and Balʿamīs who had run the state during his father's reign. He was a respected member of the scholarly establishment with which the Sāmānids had traditionally enjoyed strong ties and his appointment served as a public demonstration of Nūḥ's determination to put his father's sins behind him. But although al-Sulamī was widely admired by his contemporaries for his piety and devotion to scholarship, he soon turned out to be an incompetent administrator and displayed no interest

at all in currying favour with powerful men of state. His lack of experience in matters of state was to cost Nūḥ dearly.

Having come to power in such turbulent times, Nūḥ urgently needed to secure the allegiance of the senior *amīr*s who had served under his father, but he quickly ran into difficulties with the most powerful of them, the governor of Khurāsān. Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣāghānī was a member of the ruling house of the province of Ṣāghāniyān, the Muḥtājid dynasty, which had served the Sāmānids for many decades.[4] As governor of Khurāsān from 327/938, Abū ʿAlī had enjoyed a successful career. Its highlight was his conquest of the northern Iranian province of the Jibāl in 329/940–41. His seizure of the provincial capital of al-Rayy returned the region to direct Sāmānid rule after an interval of many years during which several Caspian princes had held power, under the nominal authority of Bukhārā. But when his patron Naṣr died, Abū ʿAlī's position was weakened and his enemies, covetous of the enormous wealth and influence which he had acquired, looked for ways to turn the new *amīr* against him. The Muḥtājids may already have fallen under suspicion of involvement in the Ismaili scandal, since it appears that one of Abū ʿAlī's brothers was executed in Nūḥ's purge of 333/944.[5] Added to this, and for reasons which are not explained in the texts, Nūḥ decided to reverse his father's policies towards the Caspian princes. He offered his support to the Ziyārid prince Washmgīr, whom Abū ʿAlī had expelled from al-Rayy in 329/940, while ordering Abū ʿAlī himself to return to the Jibāl from Khurāsān and retake the city of al-Rayy, which was now under the control of Abū ʿAlī's Būyid ally, Ḥasan b. Buwayh (Rukn al-Dawla).[6]

Nūḥ sent Abū ʿAlī twice into the Jibāl. On the first occasion, in 332/944, he was betrayed by a detachment of his own soldiers and returned to Nīsābūr, having failed to breach the walls of al-Rayy. He made a second attempt in Ramaḍān 333/May 945 at the head of a huge force supplemented by extra troops seconded to his command by Nūḥ. This time he entered al-Rayy unopposed, finding the city abandoned by its Būyid governor.[7] But even before he led his victorious army into the city, Abū ʿAlī realised that he was no longer the master of his own destiny as he had been in

329/940. When he left Khurāsān, Nūḥ had sent with him two officers with wide-ranging powers that infringed directly upon Abū ʿAlī's authority: an *ʿāriḍ* (Army Inspector) and a *mutawallī al-dīwān* (Chief Clerk). The inspector's conduct caused great resentment among Abū ʿAlī's troops, while the chief clerk took responsibility for the apportionment of revenue from the newly-conquered territories as well as the payment of the army, both of which were matters that had fallen within Abū ʿAlī's jurisdiction in Naṣr's day. Nevertheless, once in charge of al-Rayy, Abū ʿAlī despatched agents throughout the Jibāl and waited for news of his victory to reach his sovereign. He must have been surprised indeed when instead of receiving Nūḥ's congratulations, he heard that, soon after his own departure from Nīsābūr, Nūḥ had travelled to the Khurāsānī capital in order to hear serious charges which had been levelled against him by the inhabitants of the city, who it seems had been put up to the task by his enemies. After nearly two months of deliberation, Nūḥ announced Abū ʿAlī's dismissal from the governorship and his replacement in that post by his former deputy, Ibrāhīm Sīmjūrī. Abū ʿAlī's generals, already dissatisfied by their treatment at the hands of Nūḥ's officials, now realized that their leader had no future in Nūḥ's regime and decided to stage a revolt. They went to Abū ʿAlī with a plan to summon Nūḥ's uncle, Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad, from exile in al-Mawṣil, and to make him *amīr* in place of Nūḥ. Abū ʿAlī initially refused to join their plot, but after being threatened with mutiny, agreed to their plan and the die was cast.[8]

This is the story as it is told by Ibn al-Athīr, probably drawing upon the *Ta'rīkh wulāt Khurāsān* of al-Sallāmī (d.*ca.* 350/961), who was a protegé of the Muḥtājid family and thus protective of the reputation of his patrons.[9] But Ibn al-Athīr also notes the existence of a different version of events, which he attributes to the 'Iraqi historians,' and which we find elaborated in some detail in Miskawayh's *Tajārib al-umam.*[10] Miskawayh introduces a second element into the story which is entirely ignored by al-Sallāmī: that is, the diplomatic efforts which were made by Abū ʿAlī's Būyid ally, ʿAlī (ʿImād al-Dawla), to accelerate the deterioration in relations between Nūḥ and Abū ʿAlī and to achieve the Būyid objective

of re-occupying al-Rayy. Miskawayh tells an extraordinary tale of cunning and duplicity on the part of ʿAlī b. Buwayh, who must have been exceptionally well informed about events in the Sāmānid court which he had once served. Realising that Abū ʿAlī was no longer in a position to support Būyid interests, the Būyid *amīr* played one side off against the other so effectively that he not only achieved his aim of regaining possession of al-Rayy, but also succeeded in toppling Nūḥ from his throne and installing in his place a pretender who was dependent on Būyid support.

Miskawayh's version of events begins with Abū ʿAlī's approach towards al-Rayy in Ramaḍān 333/944. Contrary to the Khurāsānī version, Miskawayh tells us that al-Ḥasan b. Buwayh abandoned al-Rayy, not because he feared an engagement with the superior forces of the Sāmānids, but because he had received instructions to do so from his brother ʿAlī. The latter then put into operation an elaborate campaign of disinformation. He began by contacting Nūḥ and offering to sign a ten-year contract to farm the revenues of al-Rayy for Nūḥ's benefit, by the terms of which the Būyid promised to send to Bukhārā a larger sum in annual revenue than Abū ʿAlī. Nūḥ must have expected Abū ʿAlī to react badly to the news of his dismissal from the governorship of Khurāsān, for he responded to the Būyid initiative immediately, despatching a secret agent to Fārs in order to settle the fine detail of the proposal and bring back with him the completed contract. ʿAlī b. Buwayh dragged his feet in his negotiations with Nūḥ's agent and in the meanwhile sent messages of encouragement to Abū ʿAlī in al-Rayy, warning him against Nūḥ's perfidy and assuring him of his continued support.[11]

By the beginning of 334/945, ʿAlī b. Buwayh was aware that his younger brother, Aḥmad, who was leading his forces towards Baghdad, would soon be in a position to take the caliphal capital. Before the death of the *amīr al-umarā'* Tūzūn, in Muḥarram 334/August 945, Aḥmad had sent a confidential message to the caliph al-Mustakfī, pledging his loyalty and preparing the way for his final advance into the city in Jumādā I 334/December 945. But in the month following his entry into Baghdad, Aḥmad deposed al-Mustakfī – after he had obligingly conferred the title Muʿizz

al-Dawla upon him, and the titles ʿImād al-Dawla and Rukn al-Dawla upon his brothers ʿAlī and al-Ḥasan – and replaced him with the puppet caliph al-Muṭīʿ li'llāh.[12] Once the Būyids had the caliph under their control, Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad, the future pretender to the Sāmānid throne, must have realized that he would receive caliphal endorsement if he were successful in driving his nephew out of Transoxiana. Fortified by this knowledge, Ibrāhīm left the Ḥamdānid court where he resided, crossed the Tigris at Takrīt and travelled to Hamadān where, just two months after al-Muṭīʿs enthronement, he was welcomed by Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī.[13]

The revolt gathered pace rapidly. The rebels reached al-Rayy in Shawwāl 334/May 946 and set out for Khurāsān at the end of the year. ʿImād al-Dawla wrote to Nūḥ, proposing that he should attack the rebels from the rear as they made their way into Sāmānid territory: an offer upon which he never made good. Abū ʿAlī wrote to ʿImād al-Dawla informing him of his departure from al-Rayy and ʿImād al-Dawla instructed his brother Rukn al-Dawla to occupy the city.[14] This he did in Muḥarram 335/August 946, the same month in which the rebels took Nīsābūr, and celebrated his triumph by striking the first Būyid coins known from the mint of al-Muḥammadiyya.[15] The rebels meanwhile moved eastwards from Nīsābūr, taking Marw in Jumādā I 334/December 945 and Bukhārā in Jumādā II. Nūḥ fled in panic before them, his army in disarray. His troops accused the vizier al-Sulamī of having provoked the rebellion by his administrative incompetence and demanded the payment of outstanding wages which they claimed al-Sulamī had withheld from them. Nūḥ was forced to surrender his beloved mentor to his soliders in order to prevent them from defecting to the enemy. Al-Samʿānī tells us that al-Sulamī had his head shaved, donned a shroud and spent the night in prayer before his execution.[16] Nūḥ retreated to Samarqand when Bukhārā fell, and then left Samarqand, probably travelling to the eastern province of Farghāna.[17] Once in control of Transoxiana, Ibrāhīm received certification of al-Muṭīʿs endorsement of his claim to the Sāmānid throne, in the form of a robe of honour and a document of investiture, procured for him from a willing caliph by his Būyid masters.[18] Ibrāhīm publicized his accession by striking

precious metal coinage bearing his name in Nīsābūr and Samarqand.[19] In the event, the rebellion collapsed before the year's end. Ibrāhīm capitulated in Ramaḍān and Abū ʿAlī left Bukhārā, to continue his war against Nūḥ for a further two years, before signing a truce in 337/948.[20]

Figure 15.1: The Bukhārā dirham of '336' with the title *al-malik al-mu'ayyad min al-samāʿ* in the marginal legend (two obverse sides: enlarged)

It was most likely during his short period of exile from Sughd (Jumādā II to Ramaḍān), that Nūḥ abandoned the traditional title favoured by his predecessors, *al-amīr al-sayyid,* in favour of the royal title, *al-malik al-mu'ayyad.* The new title first appeared on a copper coin struck in 335/946 in the town of Naṣrābād in Farghāna.[21] Given the collapse of relations between Nūḥ and al-Muṭīʿ – as is evident from Nūḥ's refusal to acknowledge the latter on his precious metal coinage – it is logical to assume that Nūḥ was not granted it by the caliph, but on the contrary adopted it on his own initiative. It is interesting first of all because of its incorporation of the term *al-malik* (king), one of the earliest instances of the public adoption of the term by a Muslim ruler.[22] But also significant is the introduction of the theophoric epithet *al-mu'ayyad*, or in its extended form *al-malik al-mu'ayyad min al-samāʿ* (the King who Receives Divine Aid from Heaven), which, as Ibn Ẓāfir informs us, was awarded to Nūḥ by his own entourage

(*aṣḥāb*).[23] The choice of the unusual supplementary phrase, '*min al-samā'*,' rather than the more obvious '*bi'llāh*' may have been dictated by the desire to avoid too close a resemblance to the construction of common caliphal titles, such al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh, al-Muttaqī li'llāh, al-Mustakfī bi'llāh, etc. The intention behind Nūḥ's public declaration of this innovative title was clear. Expelled from his capital by a pretender who enjoyed the endorsement of the newly-enthroned Abbasid caliph, Nūḥ was forced to seek a new form of words which would encapsulate his superior entitlement to the Sāmānid throne. The title of king elevated his status above that of the pretender, while the reference to unmediated contact with the heavens maintained the all-important claim to divine sanction for his authority as king.[24]

Table 15.1
Coins of the Reign of Nūḥ Bearing the Title *al-malik al-mu'ayyad*

Mint	Date (AH)	Metal	Caliph*	Reference
Naṣrābād	335	copper		See note 21
Bukhārā	'336'	silver	Some with al-Mustakfī, some without caliph [27]	Rispling 1996 (see note 25 and Fig.1)
Bukhārā	339–40	silver	Some with al-Mustakfī, some without caliph	Rispling 1996
Bukhārā	341–43	silver	al-Mustakfī	Rispling 1996
Nīsābūr	339?–43	silver & gold[28]	al-Mustakfī	Rispling 1996
Jurjān	341	silver	al-Mustakfī	Rispling 1996
Naṣrābād	341–42	copper		See note 26
Qubā	341	copper		See note 26
Āmul	343	gold	al-Mustakfī	Stern 1967, nos.28–28a[29]

* Only appears on gold and silver.

The *fals* of Naṣrābād is the only example of a coin bearing the new title struck during the revolt of Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad. Thereafter, Nūḥ does not appear to have employed the title regularly until 339/950; from 339/950 to 343/954, it occurs on the silver coinage of his capital, Bukhārā, and on the precious metal coinage of the western Sāmānid mints, Nīsābūr, Jurjān and Āmul (see Table 15.1).[25] But it is not found on the prolific issues of the two large Transoxianan silver mints, Samarqand and al-Shāsh, nor on any other silver issues of the second half of Nūḥ's reign. As for the copper coinage, the title occurs only on issues of the Farghānan mints of Naṣrābād and Qubā in 341–342/952–954.[26]

It is clear from the list of mints in Table 15.1 that Nūḥ employed the title selectively in the last years of his reign. Apart from the copper issues of the Farghānan mints, all the coins which bore the title were precious metal issues from mints located in the central and western regions of the Sāmānid territories. Why was the title restricted to coinage from this area? A conclusive answer to the question is beyond this study, but it is perhaps significant that, apart from Bukhārā, the mints concerned were located close to the neighbouring Būyid territories. Could Nūḥ have ordered its inclusion in the legends of these western Sāmānid coins as a way of declaring to his enemies and their caliphal puppet that he remained unbowed by their efforts to dethrone him? Sāmānid precious metal coinage certainly circulated in central Iran in the early 4th/10th century, as we know from the evidence of the Iṣfahān hoard.[30] Furthermore, Nūḥ did not hesitate to pursue his struggle against the Būyids once he had recovered from the attempt on his throne. After coming to terms with Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī in 337/948, he sent his new governor of Khurāsān, Manṣūr b. Qarātegīn, against Rukn al-Dawla in al-Rayy in 339/950,[31] and when Manṣūr died in 340/951, he turned to Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī and invited him to take up his old post once again. Abū ʿAlī led an expedition against Rukn al-Dawla which succeeded in extracting from the Būyid a promise to pay an annual tribute in return for the right to remain in the city.[32] Nūḥ was clearly determined to pay the Būyids back for their part in assisting Ibrāhīm's coup and conducted his campaign against them with

all the means at his disposal, both military and diplomatic: the deliberate flaunting of his royal title on coins that would have changed hands in market-places within the Būyid domains may have constituted one element of his strategy.

Although good relations were restored with the Abbasid caliph soon after the accession of Nūḥ's son and successor, ʿAbd al-Malik (343–350/954–961), and al-Muṭīʿs name appeared on the coinage from 346/957, the phrase *al-malik* remained within the titulary repertoire of the later Sāmānids. All but one of Nūḥ's successors are known to have used titles which combined the word *al-malik* with a personal epithet. However, judging by the numismatic evidence, the later Sāmānids employed their royal titles even more sporadically than Nūḥ had.[33] There is evidence that the royal titles were employed in non-numismatic contexts in the reign of Manṣūr b. Nūḥ, but since we know nothing about the formulae used in the Sāmānid chancery, we cannot say whether such titles formed a standard part of their titulature in all media.[34] By contrast, the Būyids made consistent and widespread use of the *malik* title after its introduction by ʿAḍud al-Dawla in 364/974.[35]

The second aspect of dynastic titulature to be considered in this paper – the use of the title 'Shāhānshāh' – has already been explored from the Būyid perspective by Wilferd Madelung himself.[36] Madelung argues convincingly that the Būyids first used the title in the early years of their rule over southern Iran and continued to employ it throughout the period of their domination of the central Islamic lands. He suggests that the Būyid amirs called themselves 'Shāhānshāh,' not out of an unrealistic desire to repossess the territory of the ancient Iranian kings, but in order to signal their autonomy from the caliphate and their superiority over the Daylamī aristocracy, to which, as the sons of a humble fisherman, they did not belong, but whose services as military leaders they wished to retain. Imperial titulature provided the Būyids with a charismatic identity that appealed powerfully to all Caspian peoples, who were acutely aware of their links with the pre-Islamic past.[37] Madelung makes the point that the imperial title was employed for different purposes by different members of the Būyid family. He shows that whereas ʿImād al-Dawla and

Rukn al-Dawla confined its use to their own internal Daylamī constituencies, ʿAḍud al-Dawla introduced it onto his standard coinage once he had conquered Iraq and unified the Būyid lands.[38] In the years after ʿAḍud al-Dawla's death several of his descendants laid claim to it, often without the slightest justification.

Figure 15.2: Rukn al-Dawla's medallion (al-Muḥammadiyya 351/962); (below) Manṣūr b. Nūḥ's medallion (Bukhārā 358/968) (both enlarged)

Evidence has recently come to light that in the middle of his reign, the Sāmānid Manṣūr b. Nūḥ (350–365/961–976) made use of the title *shāhānshāh*, just as Rukn al-Dawla had done in 351/962. A silver medallion produced in Bukhārā in 358/968–69 is probably the work of the very same craftsman who had made Rukn al-Dawla's famous portrait medallion in Muḥammadiyya seven years earlier. Both medallions bear the Middle Persian inscriptions *xwarrah afzut/shahanshah* to either side of the regal bust and display a similar set of Arabic inscriptions on the reverse (See Fig. 2).[39] The regal bust on the obverse of the Bukhāran piece is of singular interest, since, unlike its Būyid counterpart, it is plainly not derived from the Sasanian repertoire of imperial portraiture. Instead its inspiration appears to be from an eastern Iranian source.

It is tempting to see Manṣūr's medallion as a direct riposte to Rukn al-Dawla's piece of 351/962. The similarity of its inscriptions and format suggest that Manṣūr was consciously attempting to trump his rival's pretentious claim. It is very likely that the Sāmānid court was aware of the existence of Rukn al-Dawla's medallion. As already noted, the human traffic between royal courts of this period was considerable; furthermore the two rulers were often in communication with each other over the thorny issue of the terms and conditions under which Rukn al-Dawla was allowed to maintain his rule over al-Rayy. Manṣūr undoubtedly regarded his Būyid contemporary as his inferior, because for much of his reign Rukn al-Dawla was compelled to pay the annual tribute to Bukhārā which had first been negotiated in the reign of Manṣūr's father. His claim to have inherited the role of the King of Kings must have grated on Sāmānid ears and perhaps provoked Manṣūr's decision to commission a piece from the same craftsman which would proclaim his own superior entitlement to the heritage of the Khusraws. The testimony of this remarkable donative coin – which was probably intended for distribution to the amir's courtiers at Nawrūz – confirms that, like Rukn al-Dawla, Manṣūr used the title solely within a courtly context. It formed part of the same lexicon of adulation upon which the poets Rūdakī, Daqīqī and their peers drew when they sang the praises of their patrons,

comparing them with the heroic figures of the ancient Iranian world. Niẓām al-Mulk tells us that Manṣūr's son, Nūḥ II (365–387/975–997), was also known as Shāhānshāh.[40] Perhaps his decision to adopt the imperial title was provoked by the vigorous claim which ʿAḍud al-Dawla's made to it from 368/978;[41] like his father, however, Nūḥ II, restricted its use to his inner circle and never incorporated it on his standard coinage.

The numismatic evidence addressed in this paper may be summarized as follows. The Sāmānid *amīr* Nūḥ took the title *al-malik* in the same year that his throne was usurped by a pretender, whose actions were supported by the Abbasid caliph. Nūḥ's adoption of the title should therefore be seen as a tactic designed to underline his claim to the throne at a time when, for all practical purposes, he was no longer ruler. Having regained his kingdom and disposed of his uncle Nūḥ did not immediately put his new title into circulation on his coinage. He adopted it only in the last years of his reign, and only at certain mints, probably intending to use it as a propaganda weapon in his struggle against his Būyid rivals. Nūḥ's successors made very inconsistent use of the royal title on their coinage, in contrast to the Būyids, who from 364/974, added royal titles to the string of honorifics which they were granted by the caliph. Nūḥ's son, Manṣūr adopted the title 'Shāhānshāh' in 358/968, probably in response to the challenge represented by Rukn al-Dawla's medallion of 351/962, but confined its display within his courtly circle. Neither he nor his son, Nūḥ II, placed the title on the standard coinage of the realm, again in contrast to the practice of the later Būyids. While the Būyids showed little hesitation in casting themselves as kings and emperors, the Sāmānids' reluctance to do likewise must have arisen, at least in part, from their long-standing record as pious *ghāzī* warriors, upon whose shoulders the mantle of kingship, a concept regarded with deep suspicion in the early Muslim world, never sat comfortably.

Notes

1. See W. Madelung, 'Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣābī on the Alids of Ṭabaristān and Gīlān,' *JNES,* 26 (1967), pp.17–57; 'The Assumption of the Title

Shāhānshāh by the Būyids and the Reign of the Daylam (*Dawlat al-Daylam*),' *JNES,* 28 (1969), pp.84–108, 168–183; and 'The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran,' in *The Cambridge History of Iran*: Volume 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs,* ed. R.N. Frye (Cambridge, 1975), pp.198–249.

2. P. Crone and W.L. Treadwell, 'A New Text on Ismailism at the Samanid Court,' in C.F. Robinson, ed. *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards* (Leiden, 2003).

3. For the most informative biography of al-Sulamī, see al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb* (Hyderabad, 1977), vol.8, pp.187–192 ('Al-Shahīd').

4. For the Muḥtājids, see C.E. Bosworth, 'The Rulers of Chaghāniyān in Early Islamic Times,' *Iran,* 19 (1981), pp.1–20.

5. Crone and Treadwell, 'A New Text on Ismailism,' section II (d), no.6.

6. For Abū 'Alī's victory over Washmgīr in 329 AH, which was achieved with the collaboration of the Būyids, see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh* , ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–76; repr., Beirut, 1965–66), vol.8, pp.361 and 369–370.

7. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, pp.443–444 (expeditions of 332 and 333 AH).

8. Ibid., vol.8, pp.458–459, for the appointment of the *'āriḍ* and the *mutawallī al-dīwān,* Nūḥ's dismissal of Abū 'Alī from the governorship of Khurāsān and Abū 'Alī's decision to rebel. For the interference of the *mutawallī al-dīwān* in the matter of revenue distribution, see Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā* (Tehran, 1338 Sh./1960), vol.4, p.46.

9. For Ibn al-Athīr's use of al-Sallāmī, see O.B. Frolova, 'K voprosu ob istochnike svedenii Ibn al-Asira o pravlenii Samanidov (X v.),' *Pamiati akademika Ignatiia Iulianovicha Krachkovskogo* (Leningrad, 1958), pp.36–43.

10. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, pp.463–464.

11. Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam,* ed. and tr. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1920–21), vols 2, pp.100–102, and 5, pp.105–108.

12. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, p.449 (Aḥmad b. Buwayh's relations with al-Mustakfī and entry into Baghdad); Ibid., p.452 (deposition of al-Mustakfī and enthronement of al-Muṭī').

13. Ibid., vol.8, p.459.

14. Miskawayh, *Tajārib,* vols 2, p.102 and 5, pp.107–108. In his summary of the Iraqi version of events, Ibn al-Athīr notes that, after the rebellion had begun, 'Imād al-Dawla wrote to Nūḥ to apologise for failing to send the first instalment of money he had promised him, and explain-

ing that he had withheld the sum because he feared that it might fall into the hands of the rebels (*al-Kāmil,* vol.8, p.464).

15. For dinars and dirhams struck in al-Muḥammadiyya in 335 AH, see W.L. Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage: A Die Corpus (322–445 AH)*, (Oxford, 2001), p.195. The engraver who made the dies from which these coins were struck was a man by the name of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, whose career lasted at least into the mid-360s/970s, but who only began to sign his full name on the dies he produced in the early 360s. See Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage,* p.xviii; and, e.g., a dinar of al-Muḥammadiyya dated 362, type Mu362a, which bears the miniscule legend *ʿamal al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad* (Ibid., p.204); and compare the orthographic similarities and resemblance of the ductus of the inscriptions in the latter (Ibid., plate no.149) with dirhams and dinars of 335 AH, e.g. Mu335G.4 and Mu335G.R4 (Ibid., plate no.144). The extended argument for the common authorship of the dies of 335 and 362 rests on a great deal of further data which cannot be dealt with here.

16. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, p.459: al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb,* vol.8, p.191. Ibn al-Athīr gives the date of his death as Jumādā I, whereas al-Samʿānī dates it to Rabīʿ II.

17. Neither the rebel occupation of Samarqand nor Nūḥ's exile in Farghāna are recorded in our texts; but Ibrāhīm struck coins bearing the mintname Samarqand, and the *fals* of Naṣrābād (Farghāna) dated 335 AH (see below) was probably struck while Nūḥ was in the province.

18. Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār al-duwal al-islāmiyya* (unpublished edition of the chapter on the Sāmānids in Treadwell, *The Political History of the Sāmānid State,* unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1991), fol. 126b states: *wa dakhala Ibn Muḥtāj wa Ibrāhīm Bukhārā wa jalasa majlis al-malik bi-hā wa dhālika fi sana khams wa thalāthīn. Wa tawassaṭat banū Buwayh amrahu maʿa al-imām al-Muṭīʿ li'llāh fa-baʿatha ilā Ibrāhīm bi al-khilaʿ wa al-ʿahd.* Miskawayh, *Tajārib,* vol.2, p.101, notes that Ibrāhīm's former patron, the Ḥamdānid Nāṣir al-Dawla, also sent robes of honour and a banner (but no document of investiture) to Ibrāhīm when the latter was setting out for Nīsābūr.

19. A specimen of Ibrāhīm's silver coinage from Nīsābūr is known in Stockholm, no.SHM 6331: reference from G. Rispling, *Samanid coins (Preliminary list, March 1996)* (unpublished typescript, 1996). For the dinars of Nīsābūr see, e.g., Shamma collection, no.7993 (presently housed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). For Samarqand dirhams see, e.g., three specimens in Stockholm, nos. SHM 1501, 15679 and 7858 (Rispling, *Samanid coins*). The Samarqand dirhams bear the name of al-Muṭīʿ, but

the Nīsābūrī coins, rather surprisingly, bear the name of the deposed caliph al-Mustakfī, probably a result of the die-engraver's carelessness.

20. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, p.461. (Ibrāhīm's surrender). Abū 'Alī's continuing resistance is related by Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār,* ed. 'A. Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1347 Sh./1968), pp.156–157 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, pp.460–463 and 470.

21. See B.D. Kochnev, 'Zametki po srednevekovoĭ numizmatike Sredneĭ Azii: Chast' I (Samanidy, Karakhanidy, Dzhanidy),' *Istoriia material'noĭ kul'tury Uzbekistana* 14 (1978), pp.121–123. This *fals* of Naṣrābād, the earliest known copper from the mint, exists as a unique specimen, which was discovered in 1973 during the excavation of medieval Nasaf (=Shullyuk-tepe in the Kashkadarya valley). Its reverse legend reads: *li'llāh / muḥammad / rasūl allāh / al-malik al-mu'ayyad / nūḥ b. naṣr.* It bears the date 305 in the obverse marginal legend, but Kochnev explains this as a mistake on the part of the die-engraver and points out that 335 is the only date which would account for the inclusion on the reverse field of Nūḥ's name, since his reign extended from 331–343/ 942–954.

22. A Musāfirid dirham of Urmiyya (wrongly identified as from the mint of Armenia) dated to 333 AH bears the letters *al-m.l.k* on its obverse field, but it is not known how the word should be read, or to which of the persons mentioned on the coin, it applies. See P. Lemaire, 'Muhammadan Coins in the Convent of the Flagellation,' *The Numismatic Chronicle,* 5th series, 18 (1938), p.299.

23. Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār,* fol. 126a: *laqqabahu aṣḥābuhu fī ḥayātihi bi'l-mu'ayyad.* Ibn Ẓāfir states that Nūḥ's father Naṣr was also known by the title *al-mu'ayyad* (Ibid., fol. 120b). But since his history is often inaccurate in matters of titulature and the title is not attributed to Naṣr by any other source, it is unlikely that this information is correct. The extended form of the title occurs on the outer obverse marginal legend of the Bukhāran dirham of '336' as follows: *al-amīr al-sayyid al-malik al-mu'ayyad min al-samā' abū muḥammad nūḥ b. naṣr* (See Fig. 15.1). See note 25 for the problematic dating of this type. Also worthy of note is the curious coincidence between Nūḥ's chosen epithet (*al-mu'ayyad*) and the concept of *ta'yīd* in contemporary works of Ismaili literature. See Paul E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993), index '*ta'yīd.*' Not only the great figures of the past, but also contemporaries, including the *dā'īs* themselves, could be recipients of such divine inspiration (Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*), p.186, note 31 where Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī [d. after 361/971] refers

to the *ta'yīd* which he received from God). The question is whether Nūḥ was aware of the Ismaili usage of the term and, if so, what he intended when he adopted it himself. Given that he executed al-Nasafī, the leader of the Khurāsānī *da'wa* and teacher of al-Sijistānī, only two years before adopting the title, it is extremely unlikely that he was making a bid for Ismaili support. On the contrary, he may have appropriated it in order to demonstrate that he, and not the Ismailis, deserved the title. Towards the end of the Sāmānid period, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Sīmjūrī (d.387/997), the last of the Sāmānids' governors of Khurāsān, adopted the title *amīr al-umarā' al-mu'ayyad min al-samā'* (al-'Utbī, *Ta'rīkh al-Yamīnī*, vol.1, p.155; Gardīzī, *Zayn,* p.168 has *amīr-i mu'ayyad min al-samā'*). See also a dinar of Herat 383 (private collection, Pakistan) struck by Abū 'Alī which bears the title *al-amīr al-ajall al-mu'ayyad min al-sama'*. Abū 'Alī Sīmjūrī was rumoured to have been an Ismaili, although in his case the accusation was probably unfounded; see Crone and Treadwell, 'A New Text on Ismailism,' section II (d), no.16.

24. Although we do not know which titles Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad adopted in 335/946, it is likely that the investiture document despatched by al-Muṭī' granted him the use of the traditional Sāmānid honorific, *al-amīr al-sayyid*.

25. The date of the earliest Bukhāran dirham to bear the title is not known for certain, since the numismatic evidence suggests that coins bearing the date 336/947 (which are the only ones to bear the long version of the title) may not have been struck until 338/949–50 (oral communication from Gert Rispling, 1999). The data concerning Nūḥ's titulature on the precious metal coinage (see Table) has been derived largely from the unpublished coin lists and notes of Gert Rispling, formerly of the Numismatic Institute, Stockholm (see Rispling, *Samanid coins*). Rispling was the first scholar to decipher the legends on the Bukhāran dirhams correctly and to outline the chronological problems surrounding their issue. I am grateful to him for his permission to publish this brief summary of his findings.

26. For Naṣrābād 341, see E.A. Davidovich 'Vladeteli Nasrabada (po numizmaticheskim dannym),' *Kratkie soobshcheniia instituta istorii material'noĭ kul'tury,* 61 (1956), p.107. Davidovich notes the following dates for Naṣrābād coppers issued during Nūḥ's reign: 336, 340 and 341. On the *fals* of 341 Davidovich read the inscriptions on the reverse field as ... *al-malik al-mamālik* (sic.)/*nūḥ b. naṣr* ... which must be a misreading of *al-malik al-mu'ayyad*. Naṣrābād 342 is published in T. Mayer, *Nord- und Ostzentralasien,* Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen: XVb

Mittelasien II (Tübingen and Berlin, 1998), no.600. For Qubā 341, see E.A. Davidovich, 'Samanidskie monety Kuby,' *Sovetskaia Arkheologiia,* 2 (1960), p.254 where the title occurs in the reverse marginal legend in the phrase *mimmā amara bihi al-malik al-mu'ayyad abū muḥammad nūḥ b. naṣr aʿazzahu allāh.*

27. The omission of the name of the caliph on some dirhams of Bukhārā in Nūḥ's reign may have been intentional – further research is needed to clarify this point.

28. For dinars of Nīsābūr dated 340/951–52 and 341/952–53 which bear the title, see Bibliothèque Nationale coin nos L.2567 and 1968.1061 (unpublished): several other dinars of Nīsābūr are known from this period, but I have not had the opportunity to examine their inscriptions.

29. S.M. Stern, 'The Coins of Āmul,' *The Numismatic Chronicle,* 7th series, 7 (1967), nos. 28–28a.

30. See N. Lowick, 'An Early Tenth Century Hoard from Isfahan,' *The Numismatic Chronicle,* 17 (1975), pp.110–154, for the Iṣfahān hoard (latest coin dated to 325/936–37) which contained 254 Sāmānid dirhams, or nearly 44% of the total.

31. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* vol.8, p.486.

32. Ibid., vol.8, p.504.

33. Analysis of the coinage record shows that each of Nūḥ I's successors employed only one royal title, in spite of the accumulated evidence to the contrary, most of which is derived from erroneous reports in later chronicles (especially Ibn Ẓāfir and Mīrkhwānd) and misreadings of coin legends by modern scholars. These titles were as follows – ʿAbd al-Malik (*al-malik al-muwaffaq*); Manṣūr (*al-malik al-muẓaffar*); Nūḥ (*al-malik al-manṣūr*); Manṣūr (?); ʿAbd al-Malik (*al-malik al-musaddad*); Ismāʿīl (*al-malik al-muntaṣir*). The titles should not be confused with the posthumous sobriquet which was given to each Sāmānid ruler after his death: e.g., Nūḥ b. Naṣr was also known as *al-amīr al-ḥamīd.* The subject of the use of *malik* titles by the later Sāmānids deserves more detailed examination than is possible in this paper. A preliminary examination of the numismatic record suggests that just two of Nūḥ's successors, his son Manṣūr and grandson, Nūḥ II b. Manṣūr, employed the title on their precious metal coinage, and only at certain mints, and usually for short periods of time. According to the evidence of the mint of Balkh, where royal titles and epithets were more extensively used than elsewhere, Nūḥ II, a minor at the time of his accession, used the title *al-amīr al-sayyid* in the first years of his reign and adopted the title *al-malik al-manṣūr* in 372/982–83 (the year in which he reached his majority?); see F. Schwarz, *Balh und die*

Landschaften am oberen Oxus, Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen: XIVc Čurāsān III (Tübingen and Berlin, 2002), pp.82–87; and note the recurrence of the title *al-amīr al-sayyid* on the Balkh dirhams of 378 and 381; Ibid., nos. 647–648).

34. The Arabic preface to Bal'amī's 'translation' of al-Ṭabarī's history identifies the dedicatee as *al-amīr al-sayyid al-malik al-muẓaffar abū ṣāliḥ manṣūr b. nuḥ*. See P.A. Griaznevich and A.N. Boldyrev, 'O dvukh redaktsiiakh 'Ta'rīkh-i Ṭabarī' Bal'amī,' *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie,* part 3 (1957), p.52.

35. See L. Richter-Bernburg, '*Amīr-Malik-Shāhānshāh*: 'Aḍud ad-Daula's Titulature Re-examined,' *Iran,* 18 (1980), pp.90–94 and (for details of the numismatic record) Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage.*

36. Madelung, 'Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh.'

37. Madelung, 'Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh,' p.92. For the Caspian region as a refuge for Sasanian princes and their administrators, see Madelung, 'Minor Dynasties,' pp.199–201; see also A. Kasravī, *Shahriyārān-i gumnān* (Tehran, 1335 Sh./1956) for the history of Daylamī resistance to Islam before the 4th/10th century.

38. The numismatic evidence for the use of the title *shāhānshāh* before 'Aḍud al-Dawla came to power in 366/976 consists of two medallions struck during the reign of Rukn al-Dawla, the first in Muḥammadiyya in 351/962 and the second in Fārs in 359/969–70. Both ascribe the title *shāhānshāh* to Rukn al-Dawla; *pace* M. Bahrami, 'A Gold Medal in the Freer Gallery of Art,' in George C. Miles, ed. *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld* (New York, 1952), pp.17–20, who claims that the title on the Fars medallion refers to 'Aḍud al-Dawla. For a discussion of both medallions, see G.C. Miles, 'A Portrait of the Buyid Prince Rukn al-Dawlah,' *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 11 (1964), pp.283–293. These medallions were probably distributed as gifts during festive occasions to members of the rulers' entourage and, unlike the standard coinage of the realm, were not intended for distribution beyond the court. The earliest known appearance of the title on the standard coinage of the Būyids occurs on a dinar of al-Mawṣil dated 368/978–79 (Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage,* p.159, type Ma368G).

39. The illustration of Rukn al-Dawla's medallion in Figure 2 is taken from Peus Sales, Katalog 338, April 27–29 1994, p.61, no.892. This specimen was cast from the same mould as the original piece published by Miles in 1964, but is better preserved. For the preliminary publication of the Bukhāran medallion (33mm, 11.04g), now housed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, see W.L. Treadwell, 'A Unique Portrait

Medallion from Bukhārā Dated 969 A.D.,' *The Ashmolean,* 36 (1999), pp.9–10.

40. See Niẓām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings, the Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al-Mulūk,* tr. H. Darke (London, 1960), p.160.

41. See note 38 above.

16

The Beginning of the Ismaili *Daʿwa* and the Establishment of the Fatimid Dynasty as Commemorated by al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān

Ismail K. Poonawala

Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d.363/974), the most illustrious Fatimid jurist and founder of Ismaili jurisprudence, was a prolific author with a versatile mind.[1] He entered into the service of the newly founded Fatimid dynasty while he was young and served the first four caliphs consecutively for half a century in various capacities. Being an Ismaili himself by persuasion,[2] he belonged to the elite group close to power. In 337/948 when the Caliph-Imam al-Manṣūr moved his capital to the new city of al-Manṣūriyya founded by him, he appointed Nuʿmān as the supreme *qāḍī*, the highest judicial office in the Fatimid domain.[3]

Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn (d.872/1468), the chief *dāʿī*[4] of the Mustʿalī-Ṭayyibī *daʿwa*[5] in Yaman and a noted historian, states that it was al-Manṣūr who entrusted Nuʿmān with the *daʿwa*.[6] Idrīs' statement, therefore, implies that in addition to being the chief *qāḍī*, Nuʿmān was also the chief *dāʿī* directing the affairs of the powerful religious organization from within and from without the Fatimid

empire. It was, however, during the reign of the fourth Caliph-Imam al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (341–65/953–75), with whom Nuʿmān was on more intimate terms, that he reached the apogee of his long career. Al-Muʿizz not only commissioned him to compose the *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* (*The Pillars of Islam*),[7] which was then proclaimed as the official code of the Fatimids, but also to compile an official history of the beginning of the *daʿwa* and the subsequent establishment of the Fatimid dynasty. Referring to the latter, Nuʿmān states:[8]

> And [al-Muʿizz] commissioned me to collect the history of the [Fatimid] dynasty (*akhbār al-dawla*)[9] in a book and the Fine Qualities of Banī Hāshim and the Bad Qualities of Banī ʿAbd Shams (*manāqib Banī Hāshim wa-mathālib Banī ʿAbd Shams*)[10] in another book. Hence, I complied with the request and collected material for both, each in a large volume [arranged] in several parts, as al-Muʿizz had instructed me, and classified [the material]. After [I had finished both the books], I submitted them to him and [after scrutinizing them] he approved both of them equally with satisfaction and said, 'As for the history of the *dawla*, those missionaries (*duʿāt*) and the faithful ones (*muʾminīn*), who took upon themselves to carry out the task of establishing a *dawla*, I like that their deeds be immortalized for the succeeding generations so that their names will endure in the chronicles of the bygone people, and that the [praise and] prayers of those who [read] and hear about their [exemplary deeds] will reach them [in the hereafter] and [so that the rewards which] God, the Great and Mighty, has prepared in order to honour them in the eternal abode be made known to their descendants. Since those [brave and pious souls] did not live long enough to [relate their heroic deeds] to us, it is incumbent upon us to preserve their memory and repay them their due.'

Nuʿmān's own statement describing the circumstances under which the book was written and its intended purpose is quite revealing.[11] He candidly states what he is trying to do as a historian and how he is going to accomplish his goal as instructed by al-Muʿizz. The final product of *Akhbār al-dawla*, entitled *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa wa-ibtidāʾ al-dawla* (The beginning of the *daʿwa* and the establishment of the *dawla*),[12] is, therefore, the official text

commemorating the beginning of the Ismaili missionary activities (*daʿwa*), first in Yaman around 268/881 and then in North Africa around 280/893, which led to the rise of the Fatimid dynasty to power in 297/909. In other words, Nuʿmān compiled the book to retrieve officially sanctioned views about the beginning of the *daʿwa* and the establishment of the *dawla*.

Nuʿmān's primary interest as an official Fatimid historian lies not so much in recording the so-called 'bare facts' of history, but to a great extent in moulding and reshaping the raw materials at his disposal into a meaningful narrative framework for the Ismaili and non-Ismaili readers.[13] History for Nuʿmān is not a bare collection of discrete accounts of the past and their enumeration, but it serves a more noble purpose of imparting lessons and wisdom.[14] Nuʿmān's representation of the past history of the *daʿwa* and the establishment of the *dawla* is thus significant because of its meaningfulness for the present.[15]

The *Iftitāḥ*'s compilation suggests an intricate process by which Nuʿmān, the official spokesman of the *daʿwa*, perceived those events and then recorded them for political and ideological purposes for posterity. The book depicts dramatic events of the last three decades of the 3rd/9th century that led to the meteoric rise of the Ismailis in Yaman and how the *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shīʿī was able to win over one of the great Berber tribes of Kutāma to his side and topple the Aghlabid dynasty in North Africa.[16] Those events may, therefore, appropriately be called the formative period of the *daʿwa*, which led to the Fatimid rise to power. The tale of those tumultuous events narrated by Nuʿmān in a thick volume is not only richly textured with graphic details and touching moments, but is also very compelling.

The exposition that follows intends neither to subject the aforementioned work to historical analysis, nor to source criticism, rather it aims at presenting how Nuʿmān represents the past history of the *daʿwa*, its origins and its mission, in a particular way that he wanted it to be remembered in the future as instructed by al-Muʿizz. Nuʿmān's history of the beginning of the *daʿwa*, therefore, to borrow the phrase of Bernard Lewis, can be categorized under 'remembered history,'[17] because it consists of statements

about the past – that is what history is,[18] or as the collective memory of the Ismaili community after their rise to power and consolidation of the Fatimid dynasty.

It also concerns Nuʿmān's imaginative understanding of the minds of the main actors in this dramatic narrative with whom he is dealing,[19] of the motivations behind their acts, and invokes early Islamic historical memories still vivid in the minds of the faithful. Nuʿmān knew very well that for Muslims precedent was, and still remains, the most powerful guide for thought and behaviour. He, therefore, focuses his attention on contemporary events and at the same time on the memory of earlier times, especially the days of the Prophet, in order to justify the present. Nuʿmān is, thus, obliged to search the past for inspiration, guidance, and above all evidence of legitimacy for the present.

Nuʿmān's narrative strategy in the aforementioned book is subtle and artistic. Like other historians he employs various literary devices, such as direct discourse, speeches, letters, rhetorical embellishments and well-knit narrative structure, to reveal the intended meaning.[20] The larger narrative of the beginning of the *daʿwa* and its success in attaining political power, first in Yaman and then in North Africa, which subsequently led to the establishment of the *dawla*, provides a framework for a series of small but highly anecdotal accounts.[21] Nuʿmān's account of the Yamani *daʿwa* is derived mainly from the *Sīrat Ibn Ḥawshab*,[22] while that of the Maghrib seems to have been drawn from individual or collective traditions, which referred to the events in detail.[23] Using those traditions as building blocks, he has constructed the *Iftitāḥ* and accomplished his task through a process of systematizing, expanding, abbreviating, omitting and creating. The way Nuʿmān has used and arranged the material at his disposal has significantly enhanced the import of his message.

From the start Nuʿmān invokes the traditions (*aḥādīth*) of the Prophet concerning the imminent advent of the Mahdī.[24] Belief in the coming of the Mahdī from the Family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) with messianic expectations and the hope of a religious restorer who will restore Islam to its original perfection and bring justice to people was an essential element of the faith not only

among the radical Shīʿa but also among the Twelver Imāmīs and the Ismailis. The eleventh Imam had died in 260/874, and the question of his succession not yet resolved, one could argue that the belief that there was a hidden twelfth Imam had not yet taken firm hold over the Imāmī community. On the other hand, it should be noted that these traditions were exploited since the revolt of al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī and this fact is well documented in the annals of Islamic history.[25] Moreover, Mahdī traditions incorporated in the Sunni canonical *ḥadīth* collections of Ibn Māja, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī and Ibn Ḥanbal suggest a firm basis for the popular belief in the Mahdī.[26] Nuʿmān's profuse use of those traditions at the beginning of the book was thus not only a textual and narrative strategy, but was equally meant to be legitimizing the *daʿwa* and the *dawla* at the same time.

Let us now turn to the *Iftitāḥ* itself. It opens with a brief invocation of the *basmala* and *ḥamdala* and with appropriate Qur'anic verses. It states:[27]

> Praise be to Allah, the defender of the truth and the guardian of his friends (*awliyā'*), who refutes falsehood and disgraces its upholders. He is the most truthful [when He says]: *Lo! the party of Allah, they are the victorious* [5:56]; and *Our host, they are the victors* [37:173]; *the earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants* [21:105].

After invoking God's blessing upon the Messenger of God, in accordance with the cardinal principle of the Shiʿi doctrine, he states:[28]

> God sealed the prophethood with Muḥammad, but retained the imamate in his progeny. The earth will never be devoid of an Imam. As the tyrants have overwhelmed the community the Imams were obliged to go into concealment; however, their *daʿwa* has continued in every region of the globe. We have decided to record [the history of] the *daʿwa* in the Maghrib until the advent of the Mahdī for the benefit of the posterity. We have related the description of the Mahdī and the traditions of the Messenger of God giving glad tidings of his advent in a separate tome.

Having set the stage, the main narrative begins with the launching of the *daʿwa* in Yaman. Nuʿmān states:[29]

> We begin by mentioning this blessed *daʿwa* [i.e., the Yamani *daʿwa*], since it is the origin of the [Ismaili] *daʿwa*, which we intend to recount, and that a particular *dāʿī* was dispatched to that region. Then, [a *dāʿī*] who was inspired by the holder of the *daʿwa* in Yaman and had followed his moral example, was sent to North Africa (*al-Maghrib*). The holder of the Yamani *daʿwa* was Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Faraḥ b. Ḥawshab b. Zādān al-Kūfī [generally referred to as Ibn Ḥawshab]. He was given the [honorary and pseudo-messianic] title *Manṣūr al-Yaman* ([the divinely aided] Conqueror of Yaman)[30] because he was granted victory [by God]. Whenever he was addressed by that epithet he used to say [out of modesty], 'The [divinely aided] Victorious (*al-Manṣūr*) is an Imam from among the Imams of Āl-i Muḥammad.' Did you not hear what the poet said? When the 'Victorious' appears from the progeny of Aḥmad,[31] Say to the Abbasids, 'Get up on [your] feet [and run].' It is related from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad [Imam al-Ṣādiq] that he said, 'From us [i.e., from our progeny] there will be the [advent of the] *Mahdī* and the Victorious (*al-Manṣūr*).' Yet, another tradition states, 'Give good tidings [to the faithful] that the days of the tyrants will soon come to an end. Then there will be a Restorer (*al-Jābir*) through whom God will restore the *umma* of Muḥammad [to a healthy state]; [finally] there will be [the advent of] the Victorious (*al-Manṣūr*) through whom God will make [his] religion victorious.'

Nuʿmān then narrates in full detail and with moving imagery the story of Ibn Ḥawshab's as well as his companion ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl's conversion to the Ismaili *daʿwa*. In both cases the memory of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn[32] is invoked as the most powerful image not only to determine the degree of devotion of a Shiʿi devotee, but also to win him over to the side of the *daʿwa* and recruit him as a *dāʿī*.[33] What is important to note here is that according to Nuʿmān, based on Ibn Ḥawshab's biography, both these *dāʿī*s were converted to the Ismaili cause and recruited by the then hidden Imam himself in southern Iraq.[34]

While describing Ibn Ḥawshab's journey from al-Qādisiyya, in southern Iraq, to the designated place in Yaman, Nuʿmān has

employed the clearly etched Mahdī traditions in the collective memory of the Muslims with great subtlety. As both the Shiʿis and the Sunnis shared these traditions, one can state that Nuʿmān speaks of 'shared knowledge' or 'common memory.'

Ibn Ḥawshab's mission to Yaman as depicted by Nuʿmān hardly provides the historian with bare facts, because Yaman is drawn into the picture for a different reason, while the main focus of the book is North Africa from where the Fatimids emerged. Nuʿmān's description of the beginning of the *daʿwa* in Yaman, from where the Maghribi *daʿwa* originated, consciously or unconsciously, reflects that the Ismaili *daʿwa* was one of charismatic sanction with divine endorsement. Unfortunately, as the *Sīra* of Ibn Ḥawshab is lost, one cannot exactly determine Nuʿmān's contribution; however his literary and artistic endeavours are quite obvious from fine modulations of the Mahdī theme throughout the *Iftitāḥ*. The use of animated dialogues and direct speech in recounting those traditions adds to the liveliness of the discourse.[35]

The first episode sketches Ibn Ḥawshab's and his companion ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl's arrival in Yaman when they began their clandestine activities. It is narrated by Ibn Ḥawshab himself in the first person and runs as follows:[36]

> Then we [Ibn Ḥawshab and his companion ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl] arrived in the town called ʿAdan Abyan, in southern Yaman, we discovered a Shiʿi community there known as Banū Mūsā. I entered that town in the company of my companion [ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl] under the guise of a cotton merchant and rented a shop in the market.[37] One day while I was seated in the shop clouds started to gather in the sky and soon there was a downpour. Then I realized that there were a number of people standing in front of the shop looking at me and talking among themselves. One of them came up to me, stood over me and asked if he could come into the shop.[38] I complied with his request. When that man came in he said to me, 'I don't think this is the face of a cotton merchant.'[39] I replied, 'How is that?' The man said, 'Do you have any news about Āl-i Muḥammad? (*maʿa-ka min ʿilm āl Muḥammad?*)'[40] I responded, 'I am a merchant.' The man rejoined, 'Spare me that [leave your business aside]. Perhaps you have heard about Banū Mūsā. [Haven't you?]' I answered, 'Yes.' The man then said, 'We belong

to them [i.e., Banū Mūsā], we are Shīʿa. This is the time we anticipate the arrival of the Mahdī's *dāʿī* among us. Indeed, we recognize in you those characteristics [and for that very reason we came to you].[41] So, tell us what it is you have [for us], we are your brethren.' The man persisted until I divulged the matter (*al-amr*) and he refused to depart until I took a pledge [of loyalty and secrecy] [42] from him.[43]

Nuʿmān has organized the following four episodes under the rubric 'Anecdotes from the reports about Abu'l-Qāsim [*kunya* of Ibn Ḥawshab], the holder of the Yamani mission (*dhikr nukat min akhbār Abi'l-Qāsim, ṣāḥib daʿwat al-Yaman*).'[44] The first three of them are outwardly portrayed as if they were a series of misrecognitions, because those events took place during the initial period of clandestine activities. These incidents are presented as a prelude to the ultimate unfolding of the events in the near future. The hidden, inner meaning behind those occurrences is, therefore, left for the reader to detect. The first anecdote, 'the anecdote of the rock,' narrated by Ibn Ḥawshab himself, runs as follows:[45]

At the beginning of the mission, as I was working incognito, I observed that the atmosphere was charged with the anticipation of an imminent coming (*ẓuhūr*) of the Mahdī ... once I was travelling in some of the valleys while one of the leather straps of my sandals, which passed between two toes, snapped. Hence, I sat down on a rock to repair it. And lo, an old man came to me panting and asked, 'From where are you? (*mimman al-rajul?*)' I replied, 'A stranger.' The old man asked, 'Do you have any news of the Mahdī?' I retorted, 'And who is the Mahdī?' The old man said, 'If you don't know, then this is a pure coincidence.' I asked, 'What is that? (*wa-mā dhāka?*)' The old man said, 'Once I followed a *shaykh* (old man), a Shiʿi *ʿālim* (learned man), to this place who said to me, 'The messenger of the Mahdī would enter this village; the straps of his sandals would snap near this rock and he would sit on it repairing them. Some of you may live [long enough] to witness that event (*al-zamān*, literally time).'[46] I retorted, 'But Shiʿi traditions [with regard to the Mahdī] are numerous (*kalām al-shīʿa kathīr*, literally: the Shīʿa have many stories.)' The old man murmured, 'Yes, by God, [they] are numerous.' I did not find friendly reception with

the *shaykh (wa-lam ajid ʿinda al-shaykh qabūlan*); he turned away and left.[47]

The next anecdote that Nuʿmān recalls is even more dramatic. Ibn Ḥawshab recounts as follows:[48]

> Following my arrival in the city of Ṣanʿā', I went to the [central][49] mosque [where the public prayer is performed on Friday] and offered two r*akaʿāt* of prayers near a column. After I had finished prayers [I was overtaken by fatigue],[50] so I folded my outer garment, put it under my head [as a pillow] and lay on my back putting one leg over the other. And lo, [as soon as I settled in the place][51] an old man kicked me with his feet, scolded me and said, 'Get up.' I got up immediately and reposted, 'What's the matter, O shaykh that I am the one to be singled out from the rest. There are many people lying in the mosque.' The old man replied,[52] 'I do not disapprove of your lying down, but this column – it is related that when the Mahdī's *dāʿī* enters Ṣanʿā' he will come to it, offer two *rakaʿāt* of prayers and lie down on his back near it, putting one leg over the other. I disapproved of your [manner] for making yourself to resemble him.' I rejoined, 'What that has to do with me? (*wa-mā anā wa-hādhā?*)' Some of those who were lying in the mosque heard [what] the shaykh [had uttered] and said [to him], 'How strange is what you said! (*mā aʿjaba amraka! Amr*, literally means an affair). It is as if this man was the Mahdī's *dāʿī*.' The Shaykh retorted, 'He is not that person, but I disliked that any person other than [that providentially designated *dāʿī*] should make himself to look like him.' I therefore [collected my belongings], stood up and slipped away [from the mosque.][53]

Another anecdote Nuʿmān relates takes place in the city of Janad, in the southern highlands of Yaman. It is also narrated in the first person from the mouth of Ibn Ḥawshab who states:[54]

> I entered that city in disguise and went straight to the central mosque [where the public prayer is performed on Fridays]. There I performed my *ẓuhr*, *ʿaṣr* and *maghrib* prayers. [When it was late evening] I asked a person who was in the mosque,[55] 'Can one spend a night in the mosque? I am a stranger here and wish to stay overnight.' He said, 'Yes, of course! All the strangers you see, they spend their nights in the mosque.' [Satisfied with the response], I sat down [in a corner].

When the people finished their last evening prayers they divided into two groups and started debating about their [religious] learning. I myself, [not taking the side of either party], sat between the two groups. One group consisted of the Shīʿa while the other belonged to the Ḥashwiyya (i.e., the Sunnis).[56] They debated for a long time, and then the Shīʿa departed. The other group also rose to disperse, but one of them said, '[Please] sit for a while.' They therefore sat and the man began looking at the Shīʿa while they were leaving. When the last of the Shīʿa had left, the man turned towards his group and said, 'Do you know the news about tonight?' They said, 'What is it?' He said, 'Isn't tonight such and such, and the month such and such?' They answered, 'Yes.'

Thereupon the man took out a book from under his sleeves and said, 'Isn't this book about which so and so from those workers in clay (*faʿala*,[57] meaning Shīʿa) referred to?' They looked at the book and replied, 'Yes, indeed it is well-known to them.' He[58] then singled out a tradition [for that night] and read to them [saying], 'One of their Imams reported to the author of this book and said, "One who lives long enough to reach the year such and such from among the inhabitants of your city, should seek the Mahdī's *dāʿī* during such and such night. For he will spend that night in the city's [congregational] mosque." They said, 'We have heard this tradition.' He rejoined,[59] 'Don't you see that those [Shīʿa] dispersed while none of them remembered this [tradition, or recognized it]? So, come on! Let us invalidate their tradition and charge them of lying by expelling everybody from the mosque tonight. Nobody will spend tonight in the mosque and thus we invalidate their report.' They all agreed, hence one of them stood up and announced, 'Oh, ye who are away from your homes, [please] disperse. Nobody from among you will spend tonight in this mosque under any circumstance. Indeed, there is a reason for this.'

Abu'l-Qāsim [Ibn Ḥawshab] said, 'I saw that every one of the strangers collected whatever possessions he had and left the mosque. But I did not know where I would go, hence I walked up to a corner and sat there and said to myself, "Perhaps whoever would force me [to leave] would take me to his house." They started forcing people to leave and extinguished the candles. A man who had extinguished most of the candles came to me[60] and said, 'Get up, O man.' I got up and said, "I am a stranger [in this city] and do

not know of any place to go. Perhaps you will take me tonight to your house and give me shelter." The man retorted, 'No, by God! I don't have any room [in my house].' Thereupon I exclaimed, 'Praise be the Lord! You are expelling me from the house of God and [at the same time] denying cover under your house!' The man felt ashamed, hence after ascertaining that everybody had left, he left me alone [and went away], and they locked the door of the mosque. I, therefore, spent a long night [in anguish] as I was scared that the mosque might be searched in the morning. But it did not happen. The following morning they opened the door, people entered and prayed, and nobody looked at me with regard to the last night's conversation.

The last episode is much more interesting. In addition to a Mahdī tradition, it introduces a dream wherein the Prophet himself appears to a man in his dream foretelling the coming of the awaited Mahdī. The cognitive significance of the dream is well established in medieval Muslim society and is explained by the observation that the Prophet's biography is interwoven with dreams foretelling the great events of the future. Suffice to mention a famous *ḥadīth* that states, 'A true vision is one forty-sixth part of prophecy.'[61] Nuʿmān relates the story from Ibn Ḥawshab who states:[62]

After I had left the city of Janad and was travelling to another destination [in the southern highlands of Yaman], I suddenly discovered that a large army was marching in [our] direction. The people [travelling with me in the caravan realized that] and said, 'This is the army of Ibn Yaʿfur[63] marching to wage war against Jaʿfar b. Ibrāhīm, the ruler of Mudhaykhara.'[64] Being afraid of the army, they dispersed seeking shelter in the nearby mountain passes, and so did I. There I saw a cave and took shelter in it. While I was sitting there a man entered, greeted me, sat down and asked, 'From where are you?' I replied, 'From this caravan. When we saw the army advancing towards us we dispersed in this mountain pass until the army passed.' The man wished me well, opened up to me in conversation and asked me about certain issues as to what is permitted and what is forbidden [according to the *sharīʿa*].[65] I responded to the issues raised by him.

Thereafter, the man looked at me with complete satisfaction

and his eyes began shedding tears [of joy]. The man then stood up and started kissing my head, hands and feet, and said, 'O my master, the Messenger of God has sent me to you to rescue me [from my wretched condition], and so you will take my hand and deliver me [from this sorry state].' I exclaimed, 'How this could be, O man!' The man said, ' Yes, indeed [you will]! I used to see the Messenger of God in my dream every year during a particular night, hence I got accustomed to be prepared for that night and that vision was never denied to me. This year, however, I did not see the Messenger of God. [A long] period of time passed by and I was greatly disturbed[and worried]. [All of a sudden], last night I had the dream. So, I said to the Prophet, "O Messenger of God, my cravings for your vision had become drawn out. You cut off from me what you had accustomed me to." The Messenger of God responded, "Indeed, I [came to] give you the good tidings [of the advent of the Mahdī] and let you know that his *dāʿī* is in your town, in the midst of your people. Rush to him and take your share of good fortune from him." I said, "But, how could I obtain [his blessings], O Messenger of God?" He said, "Tomorrow you will find him in such and such cave." And the Messenger of God described to me this cave. I said, "[O Messenger of God], I am afraid that I might encounter someone other than him." So, the Messenger of God gave me your description with all the characteristics and said, "In spite of all this [description] ask him such and such," and mentioned these issues to me and added, "If he answers you in such and such way," and related to me all your answers, "then he is your man."

Abu'l-Qāsim [Ibn Ḥawshab] said, '[When I heard that] I was overwhelmed with awe and tears flowed [from my eyes] and I exclaimed, "What can I say to the one who is sent to me by the Messenger of God?" So, I conferred with him and laid open [my mission] and took from him [his oath of allegiance].'[66]

Ibn Ḥawshab's recollection of the Mahdī traditions in association with his mission and then Nuʿmān's relating them in a particular way is indeed his reflection, as the head of the *daʿwa* and the official spokesman of the dynasty, as to how it wanted to commemorate the deeds of Ibn Ḥawshab and his brilliant success. In societies where the majority of the population is illiterate, history depends upon a memory that is shared by the entire com-

munity. The growing and invigorated Ismaili community under Ibn Ḥawshab in Yaman expressed in narratives, as narrated first by the latter and then by Nuʿmān, their need to preserve their own identity as they perceived it. Nuʿmān might have adjusted his stories, but that does not mean that those stories were prey to arbitrariness. Their flexibility and adaptability respect certain formal conditions and conventions of memorization, the sole means of transmission before it was committed to writing. Even after the Qarmaṭian[67] split and the rift with his own companion and partner ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl, Manṣūr al-Yaman had remained unflinchingly faithful to the Fatimids.[68] This memory was therefore very precious to the Ismaili/Fatimid *daʿwa*. The Mustaʿlī-Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* of the Ismailis has ever since cherished this pristine and highly valued memory of its origins and mission as preserved by Nuʿmān.

Following the above prelude the narrative turns to the mission of the *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shīʿī in North Africa, which resulted in the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty. Nuʿmān recalls that, prior to Abū ʿAbdallāh's mission, two missionaries were sent to that region by the Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.[69] This is important for establishing the *daʿwa*'s origins as going back to the latter Imam before the dispute over his succession and a major schism of his partisans into the Imāmīs (Twelvers) and the Ismailis. Moreover, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is revered for his piety and learning by the Shīʿa and the Sunnis alike. Nuʿmān is, however, silent about Abū ʿAbdallāh's conversion,[70] and states that when the *daʿwa* in Yaman had attained power, the then hidden Imam sent him to Manṣūr al-Yaman for training. The Imam instructed him to accompany the latter in his military expeditions and to follow his example. Once he had completed his apprenticeship, he was to proceed to North Africa and begin his mission in the territory of the Kutāma.[71] Although Abū ʿAbdallāh fell out of favour with the Caliph-Imam al-Mahdī soon after the establishment of Fatimid rule, Nuʿmān rehabilitated his image in the *daʿwa* and gave him full credit for his dedicated services.[72] Here also Nuʿmān has used the Mahdī traditions with ingenuity.

After a long and arduous journey from Mecca to North Africa accompanied by the Kutāma pilgrims, when Abū ʿAbdallāh ar-

rived at the Kutāma territory in 280/893, he inquired about a place called *Fajj al-akhyār* (literally: 'ravine of the best people'). When he was told that in fact he was in the said location situated near Īkjān, he exclaimed:[73]

> Indeed, places are defined by [the characteristics of] their inhabitants, and are known after them ... by God, this place is so called after you! Verily, the *ḥadīth* states, 'The Mahdī will migrate far from his native place during difficult and trying times, and he will be rendered victorious by the best of all people (*al-akhyār*) [living] during that time whose name is derived from *kitmān*.'

Abū ʿAbdallāh, then addressing the Kutāma, said, 'You are the one meant in the tradition. This place is so-called because you will emerge [victorious] from it [supporting the Mahdī].'

The tradition is pregnant with subtle allusion to al-Mahdī's long and perilous journey from Salamiyya, in Syria, to Sijilmāsa in the far west, in pre-modern Morocco. In addition to that, there is a play on the words *akhyār* and *kitmān*. *Kitmān*, a verbal noun derived from the root *k-t-m*, means to conceal, to keep secret. The name of the Berber tribe Kutāma, the mainstay of Abū ʿAbdallāh's mission, is thus implied, in the said tradition, to have derived from *kitmān*, meaning that they kept the secret of the *daʿwa* until the time was ripe for the Mahdī's advent. Abū ʿAbdallāh thereafter decided to take *Fajj al-akhyār* as his headquarters and commenced his mission.

Soon after Abū ʿAbdallāh started his missionary activity and initiated people into the mysteries of the *daʿwa* by taking the pledge of loyalty and secrecy, he addressed them as 'our brethren' and urged the faithful to address each other as 'our brethren in faith.'[74] This brings back the memory of the nascent Islamic community in Medina where the Prophet instituted a pact of brotherhood between the *Anṣār* (Helpers) and the *Muhājirūn* (Emigrants).[75]

When the envoy of the Aghlabid ruler Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad (261–289/875–902) delivered a warning letter to Abū ʿAbdallāh, he replied:[76]

> I am not the one to be intimidated with your high-sounding threats... Indeed, I am in the company of the defenders of the

> faith and the guardians of the faithful who are not scared out of their wits because of the numerical superiority of the forces of tyrants. God, the most truthful, says: *How often a small detachment defeated a larger detachment with Allāh's permission! Allah is with the steadfast* [2: 249]... verily I am sent as an envoy to [warn you] about an event that is already decreed and the time [for its fulfillment] has drawn near... *Certainly God will not fail the tryst* [3: 9].

Nuʿmān, thus, compares the stand of Abū ʿAbdallāh with a small band of his devoted Kutāma supporters against the superior Aghlabid army to that of the Prophet with a small band of Muslims over the numerically much superior force of Quraysh at the first Battle of Badr.[77] Nuʿmān's representation of the Medinan parallels[78] as a kind of re-enactment of the early Muslim *umma* seems not only to be some kind of symbolic resonance of the past, but it is equally meant to legitimize Abū ʿAbdallāh's mission and ultimately the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty.

Wadād al-Qāḍī, the editor of the *Iftitāḥ*,[79] notes in her introduction that Nuʿmān delights in drawing comparison between the state of expectation which North Africa lived through before the arrival of the Mahdī and the state of anticipation which the Arabian peninsula underwent before the mission of Muḥammad.[80] Unfortunately, she failed to realize Nuʿmān's interest and purpose for writing the *Iftitāḥ,* and like most conventional historians of Islam she was probably looking for dry facts or 'objective' history. Unable to appreciate what Nuʿmān was doing, she is at pains to show that there is a fundamental difference between the two situations.

The Mahdī traditions must have circulated widely among the Muslim communities of North Africa, especially among the various pockets of Shiʿi communities, as the mission of Abū ʿAbdallāh was gaining momentum.[81] These traditions, Nuʿmān recalls, resembled those that circulated among the pre-Islamic Arabs wherein the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad was foretold.[82] On certain occasions, Nuʿmān compares Abū ʿAbdallāh's conduct with his followers to that of the Prophet in Medina with the Muslim community.[83]

In Islam, memory was and is essential from the very beginning

and Muslims have always exhibited interest in the past. B. Lewis rightly observes that since early times Muslim entities – states, dynasties, cities, even professions – have been conscious of their place in history. Almost every dynasty that ruled in Muslim lands has left annals or chronicles of some kind.[84] Memory has remarkable ability to influence subsequent behaviour. While enumerating the excellence of historiography in his *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn states:[85]

> History is a discipline with fine principles, manifold uses, and noble intent. It informs us about the people of the past – the characters of [different] communities, the biographies of prophets, the kingdoms and politics of their kings – thereby providing [us] with example for emulation of those who desire it in religious and worldly affairs.

One could conclude that Nuʿmān represented the past history about the beginning of the *daʿwa* and the establishment of the *dawla* in the particular way that the Caliph-Imam al-Muʿizz had instructed him to be remembered in the future. One could add and state that Nuʿmān was, in fact, creating memory for the posterity, and, of course, he was successful in the mission entrusted to him.

Learning cannot occur without the function of memory. Memory is necessary for proper social and religious behaviour. Today most of us are willing to admit that objective history is an illusion, for it is impossible to record an event without making some kind of judgement about its significance. As information is handed down from the past, either by memory or in writing, judgements are made at every stage.[86] As the official spokesman of the *daʿwa* and the *dawla* alike, it is Nuʿmān's perspective on the history of both those institutions that allow us perceive their meaning.

Notes

I would like to thank my student Karim Jamal Ali and my colleague Professor Michael Morony for reading the earlier draft of this essay and giving their valuable comments and suggestions that have helped me to clarify certain issues. All translations in this chapter are mine.

1. For a detailed list of his works, see Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature* (Malibu, CA, 1977), pp.48–68.

2. He was raised and educated as an Ismaili, see Ismail K. Poonawala, 'A Reconsideration of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's *Madhhab*,' *BSOAS*, 37 (1974), pp.572–579; idem, 'Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and Ismaʿili Jurisprudence,' in Farhad Daftary, ed. *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought* (Cambridge, 1996), p.136.

3. Poonawala, 'Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and Ismaʿili Jurisprudence,' p.120.

4. *Dāʿī* (plural, *duʿāt*), meaning one who invites people to the *daʿwa*, is used for Ismaili missionaries or religio-political agents; see M.G.S. Hodgson, 'Dāʿī,' *EI2*, vol.2, pp.97–98.

5. *Daʿwa*, meaning call or invitation, is applied to the Ismaili religio-political organization. M. Canard, '*Daʿwa*,' *EI2*, vol.2, pp.168–170. It should be noted that the Ismailis themselves call their movement the *daʿwa* or *daʿwa hādiya* (the rightly-guiding mission).

6. Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut, 1975), vol.5, p.331.

7. *The Pillars of Islam*, tr. A.A.A. Fyzee, completely revised and annotated by Ismail K. Poonawala (New Delhi, 2002), vol.1, pp.xxix–xxx.

8. Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Kitāb al-majālis wa'l-musāyarāt*, ed. al-Ḥabīb al-Faqī et al. (Tunis, 1978), pp.117–118 (or 2nd ed., Beirut, 1997, p.108). This passage is also reproduced by Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn in his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1984), vol.6, p.47.

9. *Akhbār* (plural of *khabar*) means reports, pieces of information, narratives. The word was widely used for historical writing and may be older than the word *ta'rīkh*. *Dawla*, literally meaning a turn, change of time or fortune from an unfortunate to a good and happy state. In early usage, therefore, it conveyed a 'time of power and success.' Later on it acquired the meaning of dynasty and ultimately of state. E. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (repr., Cambridge, 1984), s.v. d-w-l; F. Rosenthal, 'Dawla,' *EI2*, vol.2, pp.177–178; B. Lewis, *Islam in History* (London, 1973), p.254.

10. This book of Nuʿmān is known by its abbreviated title *Kitāb al-manāqib wa'l-mathālib*, MS collection of my late father Mulla Kurban Husein Godhrawala (Poonawala); see Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p.60. The bulk of the book, as the title indicates, deals with the ancestors of the Umayyad dynasty and its early rulers. Nuʿmān's strategy is to expose their immoral characters and vices by juxtaposing the piety and learning of the Imams from the House of Banī Hāshim who were contemporaneous with the Umayyad rulers. The last, short section, compares in the

same way the Umayyad rulers of Spain with the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs. This book was completed at the same time as the *Iftitāḥ*, i.e., in 346/957. It was the time when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (300–350/912–961), the Umayyad ruler of al-Andalus, adopted the titles of Caliph and Commander of the Faithful in place of the previous simple designation of Amīr. Al-Muʿizz, having asserted his control over the central Maghrib, was eager to press hard from the Far Maghrib in a serious threat to the Umayyads of Spain. It was against this background that Nuʿmān, in a war of propaganda, fires his shot couched in the form of a tradition foretelling the end their rule. He states contemptuously, "ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was the first remnant (*baqīya*) of the accursed Umayyads to splash down (*saqaṭ*) in the land of al-Andalus, and it is said that the last of them, likewise, will be ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.' See also al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Kitāb iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, ed. F. Dachraoui (Tunis, 1975), p.240; it is hereinafter cited as *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*. See also F. Dachraoui, 'al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh,' *EI2*, vol.7, pp.485–489; C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties* (New York, 1996), pp.11–12.

11. The aforementioned statement of Nuʿmān is quite similar to that of Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn describing the circumstances under which al-Muʿizz had previously commissioned Nuʿmān to compile his *magnum opus*, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* (see *The Pillars of Islam*, vol.1, p.xxx). In all likelihood Idrīs' report is derived from some work of Nuʿmān himself, because the traditions related by Idrīs in the episode are mentioned at the beginning of the *Daʿāʾim*. Moreover, Nuʿmān states several times in his *Kitāb al-manāqib waʾl-mathālib* that he never compiled a book dealing with formal legal opinion (*futyā*) without consulting the Imam.

12. It was completed in 346/957. I have used Dachraoui's edition because it is the best of the three editions. The other two are by Wadād al-Qāḍī (Beirut, 1970) and a pirated edition by ʿĀrif Tāmir (Beirut, 1996). On the beginning of the Ismaili *daʿwa* and the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty, the *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa* has remained the main source for all subsequent historians. See Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p.59; Dachraoui's Arabic introduction, p.(letter) *dāl* (i.e., 4), French introduction, pp.36–37.

13. The question as to how scholars in the field of Islamic history have tended to use historical narratives as unstructured and uninterpretative collections of fact and fiction, see M. Waldmann, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography* (Columbia, 1980), pp.3–4; J. Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp.2–3.

14. Nuʿmān, *Kitāb al-majālis*, pp.45–47, 118; idem, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (Qumm, 1409–12/1988–92), vol.1, pp.87–88. Besides providing information about the past, history serves another purpose of revealing wisdom and ethical philosophy. See M. Arkoun, 'Éthique et histoire d'après les *Tajārib al-Umam*,' in *Atti del terzo Congresso di Studi Arabici e Islamici, Ravello, 1966* (Naples, 1967), pp.83–112; T. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography* (Albany, NY, 1975), p.32: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, p.6.

15. 'All history is contemporary history,' means that history is essentially seeing the past through the eyes of the present; B. Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty* (London, 1941), p.41, and E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York, 1963), p.22.

16. See S.M. Stern, 'Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shīʿī,' *EI*2, vol.1, pp.103–104.

17. B. Lewis, *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton, 1975), pp.11–12. The relationship between memory and history is a complex and debated issue. *History and Memory: Studies in Representation of the Past*, a journal published by Tel Aviv University, is devoted to articles, which explore various ways in which the past is commemorated and constructed by historians to fulfil an increasing variety of needs.

18. 'The history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgments.' Cited by Carr in his *What is History?* p.13.

19. Ibid., pp.26–27.

20. J. Scott Meisami, 'History as Literature,' *Iranian Studies*, 33 (2000), pp.15–30. She states that Persian writers had a consummate interest in matters of eloquence and style, since history for them was not a dry record of events but an elucidation of the meaning of those events. See also Albrecht Noth, in collaboration with L. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-critical Study* (Princeton, 1994), pp.62, 109–110, 173.

21. It is noteworthy that Nuʿmān refers neither to the activities of al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī and his companion Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ in southern Iraq, nor to the activities of the *daʿwa* in eastern Arabia, west central and northwest Persia. The reason for it is not far to seek. One of the basic purposes of 'official historiography' as remembered and recorded by Nuʿmān was to legitimize authority. The authority was vested with the Fatimid Caliph-Imams, while Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and other *dāʿī*s operating elsewhere had betrayed the *daʿwa*/the Fatimid cause and drifted away from the central authority to what became known as the Qarāmiṭa. In other words, Nuʿmān is distancing himself and the *daʿwa* from those dissident

Qarāmiṭa. For details of this schism, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.125–135. Anecdotes were used from the very early Islamic historical tradition and are found in Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra*; see Noth, *Early Arabic*, p.13.

22. According to the Ismaili sources it was composed by Ibn Ḥawshab's son Jaʿfar. Unfortunately, it is completely lost, except for some extracts in Ismaili and non-Ismaili works; see Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p.74; Abbas Hamdani, 'An Early Fāṭimid Source on the Time and Authorship of the *Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ*,' *Arabica*, 26 (1979), pp.62–75. Heinz Halm, on the other hand, suggests that the above *Sīra* was an autobiography composed by Ibn Ḥawshab himself in the last years of his life, especially when he was besieged in the Miswar mountains by his former companion ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl; see Halm, 'Die *Sīrat* Ibn Ḥaušab: Die ismailitische *daʿwa* im Jemen und die Fatimiden,' *WO*, 12 (1981), pp.107–135; idem, *Das Reich des Mahdi: Der Aufstieg der Fatimiden 875–973* (Munich, 1991), p.179; tr. M. Bonner, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden, 1996), p.195. His proposition seems to have derived from the fact that most of the extant extracts from it, found in Nuʿmān's *Iftitāḥ*, and Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, are narrated in the first person. Only one brief excerpt in Ibn Mālik al-Ḥammādī's *Kashf asrār al-Bāṭiniyya* (in S. Zakkār's *Akhbār al-Qarāmiṭa*, Damascus, 1980, p.219), prefixed by *qāla al-Manṣūr,* is similar to that in the *Iftitāḥ* but with variant readings. In his *Iftitāḥ*, Nuʿmān never cites the *Sīra* by its title, but paraphrases from it using different formulas, such as *qāla Abu'l-Qāsim* (the *kunya* of Ibn Ḥawshab) when he is reporting directly in the first person. When he is not quoting directly he uses other formulas, such as *akhbaranā ahl al-ʿilm wa'l-thiqa min aṣḥābihi*, *akhbaranā al-thiqāt min aṣḥābi Abi'l-Qāsim*; or *akhbaranā baʿḍu aṣḥābi Abi'l-Qāsim*, see *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.3, 4, 5, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25. Halm's assumption is not supported by firm evidence and contradicts the Ismaili tradition, which states that Jaʿfar was the author. In his *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue* (London, 2001), pp.23, 51–55, James W. Morris also argues forcefully that the *Sīra* was the work of Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman.

23. In his commendable study (*Das Reich des Mahdi*, pp.45, 99, 381, 390; tr. *The Empire of the Mahdi*, pp.39, 102), Halm points out that the core of the *Iftitāḥ* is based on *Sīrat Abī ʿAbdallāh*, written either by Abū ʿAbdallāh himself or by one of his closest associates. Nuʿmān has suppressed the title because Abū ʿAbdallāh had fallen into disgrace and was eliminated. Similarly, Nuʿmān has suppressed the title of *Sīrat Ibn Ḥawshab*

for a different reason as explained by A. Hamdani is his aforementioned article.

24. See W. Madelung, 'al-Mahdī,' *EI2*, vol.5, pp.230–238; A.A. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shiʿism* (Albany, NY, 1981); Lewis, *History*, pp.25–26 and idem, *Islam: From the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople* (New York, 1974), vol.1, p.xx.

25. For details see Madelung, 'al-Mahdī.'

26. Ibid.

27. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, p.1.

28. Ibid., pp.1–2. I have summarized the contents.

29. Ibid., pp.2–3.

30. For the use of this title see Madelung, 'al-Mahdī.'

31. Aḥmad, meaning the most praiseworthy, was one of the names of the Prophet; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, Volume IX: The Last Years of the Prophet*, tr. Ismail K. Poonawala (Albany, NY, 1990), p.156. This verse with a brief account of Ibn Ḥawshab's activities in Yaman is also referred to by Nuʿmān in his *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, pp.403 ff.

32. The Shīʿa have kept alive the memory of the martyred grandson of the Prophet for more than a millennium by rehearsing and interiorizing its tragic details every year, during the first ten days of Muḥarram. For the collective memory of the Shīʿa on this tragic event, see M. Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Āshūrā' in Twelver Shīʿism* (The Hague, 1978) and the following works by Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn, *'Āshūrā'* (Beirut, 1412/1991); *Thawrat al-Ḥusayn* (Beirut, 1417/1996); *Wāqiʿat Karbalā' fi'l-wijdān al-Shīʿī* (Beirut, 1417/1996).

33. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.3–10. It states: 'While I [Ibn Ḥawshab] had started the recital of the *Sūrat al-Kahf*, a *Shaykh* accompanied by a man [his *dāʿī*] approached... that man [the *dāʿī*] then informed me that the *Shaykh* is the Imam of the age (*imām al-zamān*).' The encounter of Ibn Ḥawshab with the Imam and his *dāʿī* is a very touching tale of conversion.

34. Some sources, on the other hand, indicate that Ibn Ḥawshab was recruited either by the chief *dāʿī* Fīrūz or by Ibn Abi'l-Fawāris, an assistant of 'Abdān. See W. Madelung, 'Manṣūr al-Yaman,' *EI2*, vol.6, pp.438–439. The story of both these *dāʿī*s' conversion is translated by Halm in his *Das Reich des Mahdi*, pp.38–42; tr. *The Empire of the Mahdi*, pp.31–36. The mission (*daʿwa*) in southern Iraq was managed by Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and 'Abdān.

35. Morris, *The Master and the Disciple*, p.25, has pointed out that there

are remarkable parallels between the passages adapted by Nuʿmān from the *Sīrat* and the outline of the *Kitāb al-ʿālim wa'l-ghulām*.

36. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.15–16; see also *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.411, wherein this episode is narrated at the end. The sequence of the remaining four episodes remains the same as in the *Iftitāḥ*. It should be noted that the wording of the two texts differs slightly with some additions and omissions and I have indicated only those variants or additions which I considered significant or meaningful to the context. At times I have either abridged some phrases and sentences or adjusted them for the smooth flow of the narration.

37. Addition in *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'I saw in the market a group of people conferring together about the excellent qualities (*faḍā'il*) of ʿAlī.'

38. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'A group of people from among them came into the shop; they sat and conversed with me. Then one of them pulled me by the hand and took me [to the back of the shop].'

39. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'But you have some news about Āl-i Muḥammad.'

40. It could also mean, 'Do you have any knowledge about the traditions (*aḥādīth*) of the Imams? [which you could narrate to us].'

41. Addition from *Sharḥ al-akhbār*.

42. For the importance of an oath and its formula, see H. Halm, 'The Ismaʿili Oath of Allegiance (*ʿahd*) and the "Sessions of Wisdom" (*majālis al-ḥikma*) in Fatimid Times,' in Daftary, ed. *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought*, pp.91–115.

43. In this episode there is also a puzzle about ʿAdan Lāʿa, name of a village in Yaman, where the Imam had instructed Ibn Ḥawshab to go. Nobody in Yaman knew about it and it remains like a mystery and the reader is kept in suspense until the very end of this episode when it is finally resolved.

44. Wadād al-Qāḍī (ed. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, p.47 n.3) missed the point Nuʿmān is making when she wrote that those anecdotes resemble 'tales related in the night, for amusement.'

45. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.18–19. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.404, Nuʿmān states that this incident happened in a village in the vicinity of Ṣanʿā'.

46. The old man implies that Ibn Ḥawshab might be that messenger.

47. *Sharḥ al-akhbār: 'wa-wallā ʿannī wa-lam ara fihi qabūlan ufātiḥuhu*,' meaning 'the old man turned away from me and I did not notice on him [any sign of] friendly reception, or inquisitiveness, so that I could open the conversation with him [and disclose the secret or my identity].' It could also mean that the old man, although he was foretold, was not disposed to recognize Ibn Ḥawshab as Mahdī's emissary. All these epi-

sodes contain yet another literary theme of recognition/misrecognition and disclosure, which is beyond the scope of this essay.

48. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.19–20.

49. As in *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.404: *al-masjid al-jāmiʿ*.

50. Addition from *Sharḥ al-akhbār*.

51. Addition from *Sharḥ al-akhbār*.

52. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'Get up [so that] you will not resemble the one who will lay down in this posture.' I asked, 'And who is that person?'

53. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'I got up and sat down. A man approached the *shaykh* and said, "How strange is your affair! Do you think that he [Ibn Ḥawshab] is the Mahdī's *dāʿī*?" He then began talking the same thing.' Ibn Ḥawshab continued, 'I did not notice on both of them [any sign of] friendly reception so that I could open the conversation with them. I, therefore, stood up and left.' It is worth noting that after this episode Nuʿmān relates a tradition from Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq alluding that the seed of the Yamani *daʿwa* was sown by the latter Imam. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.20–21.

54. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.21–23.

55. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'I looked at the people who seemingly were also looking for shelter for the night and asked them, 'Can ... .' They said, 'Yes, we all are strangers and we will spend the night in the mosque.'

56. A contemptuous term applied to the Sunni populace. See 'Ḥashwiyya,' in *EI2*, vol.3, p.269; Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-iftikhār*, ed. Ismail K. Poonawala (Beirut, 2000), pp.78, 280–281. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: '... and a group of the Sunnis or commonalty (*al-jamāʿa*).'

57. *Faʿala*, plural of *fāʿil*, is applied to workers in clay, or such as work with their hands in clay, or building, or digging. It is also used for carpenters. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v. f-ʿ-l. It indicates the social background of the Shīʿa in that village.

58. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'And he gave the name of the book.'

59. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'He said, "Look at the forgetfulness of those Shīʿa about this night." Abu'l-Qāsim [Ibn Ḥawshab] said, "I shuddered and a terrible fear invaded me".'

60. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*: 'Everyone of them except a man, who used to extinguish the candles, left, he then came to me.'

61. Walīy al-Dīn Muḥammad Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, ed. M. al-Albānī (Damascus, 1961), vol.2, p.528; tr. J. Robson, *Mishkat al-Masabih* (Lahore, 1975), vol.2, p.962. See also G. E. von Grunebaum, 'The Cultural Function of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam,' in G. E. von Grunebaum and R. Caillois, ed. *The Dream and Human Societies*

(Berkeley, 1966), pp.3–21, and T. Fahd, 'The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society,' in *The Dream and Human Societies*, pp.351–363.

62. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.23–25. In *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.410: 'Hence, I revealed my commission and called upon him [to join the mission] and he responded. I took [the oath of allegiance] from him on the spot and put him under an obligation.'

63. The Yaʿfurids were the Abbasid governors of Yaman, who asserted their independence and ruled from Ṣanʿā' and Janad; see Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, p.100.

64. See Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa'l-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fi'l-Yaman* (Cairo, 1955), p.36.

65. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.409: '"Do you have knowledge of *futyā* (formal legal opinions)?" I said, "I have that knowledge as a person like me is supposed to have".'

66. *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.410: 'So, I revealed my commission (*amrī*) to him and called upon him [to join the *daʿwa*] and he responded. Hence, I took the oath [of allegiance] from him on the spot [and put him under an obligation].'

67. See W. Madelung, 'Ḳarmaṭī,' *EI2*, vol.4, pp.660–665.

68. For details see al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp.39–48.

69. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.26–30; see also *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.413; Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shiʿi Witness*, an Edition and English translation of Ibn al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt* (London, 2000), p.8. The origin of the Ismaili movement is generally traced back to the dispute over the succession to the Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d.148/765). The period between this origin and the beginning of intense political activities around the middle of the 3rd/9th century, a period of almost a century, despite the efforts of some scholars, still remains somewhat obscure. The secret character of the movement and its mysterious quasi-masonic organization that concealed both doctrine and personalities from the uninitiated hinder recording the history of the movement. Nuʿmān passes over this issue as if it were a guarded secret of the *daʿwa* not to be divulged to his readers. Whether he himself was privy to it, however, is another question. See Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp.91–116; Halm's *Das Reich des Mahdi*, tr. *The Empire of the Mahdi*, is the best up-to-date survey.

70. Abū ʿAbdallāh, whose full name was al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, and his older brother Abu'l-ʿAbbās, were both converted and brought into the *daʿwa* by a *dāʿī* called Abū ʿAlī in Fatimid sources, but known in Iraqi and Abbasid sources as Ḥamdān al-Qarmaṭ. This probably explains Nuʿmān's

silence. See Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdi*, pp.44–45; tr., *The Empire of the Mahdi*, pp.38–39; Madelung and Walker, *The Advent of the Fatimids*, pp.6–7, 12. In his recent study 'Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and the *Dāʿī* Abū 'Alī,' in W. Madelung et al, ed. *Proceedings of the 17th Congress of the UEAI [Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants]* (St. Petersburg, 1997), pp.115–124, Madelung states that Ḥamdān, who had disappeared shortly after 'Abdān was murdered, re-emerged in Egypt using the name Abū 'Alī firmly supporting the new Imam al-Mahdī.

71. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.30–31.

72. See especially the section entitled *Dhikru mā ajrā Abū ʿAbdallāh fī Kutāma min al-siyāsa ...* in *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.117–132. Nuʿmān extols Abū 'Abdallāh's character, piety and fortitude, and states that peace and prosperity prevailed in the region under his control. According to Nuʿmān, it was Abu'l-'Abbās, the elder brother of Abū 'Abdallāh and also a high ranking *dāʿī*, but insidious and vicious in character, who kept on insinuating his younger brother against the Mahdī and brought about their own downfall. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.309–319; see Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdi*, pp.148–56; tr., *The Empire of the Mahdi*, pp.159–68; also *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.430. For a different view in defence of both brothers, see Madelung and Walker, *The Advent of the Fatimids*, pp.12, 31–40.

73. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, p.48; see also *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, p.416.

74. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.50,123.

75. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. M. al-Saqqā et al. (Cairo, 1936), vol.2, pp.150–153; tr. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (London, 1955), pp.234–235.

76. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.57–58.

77. W. Montgomery Watt, 'Badr,' *EI2*, vol.1, pp.867–868.

78. Abū 'Abdallāh's naming of his stronghold as *dār al-hijra* and urging his followers to make the *hijra* and join him there is another example of the Medinan parallel. See for example *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.33, 95, 96, 97, 100, 101, 109, 117, 118.

79. *Iftitāh al-daʿwa*, ed. al-Qāḍī, pp.8–9.

80. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, p.76.

81. See *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.60, 62, 68–69, 73, 74, 211–212; *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol.3, pp.418–429, and W. Madelung, 'Some Notes on Non-Ismāʿīlī Shiism in the Maghrib,' *Studia Islamica*, 44 (1977), pp.87–97. For the religious situation in Qayrawān and its Shīʿa community, see Madelung and Walker, *The Advent of the Fatimids*, pp.18–26.

82. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, p.76. Jews, Christians and Arabs predicted the

Prophet's mission; see Ibn Isḥāq, *al-Sīra*, vol.1, pp.164–177, 191–194, 217–228; tr., *The Life of Muhammad*, pp.69–73, 79–81, 90–95.

83. *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, pp.100, 117, 118.

84. Lewis, *Islam*, vol.1, p.xviii.

85. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, ed. E.M. Quatremère (Beirut, 1992, photo reproduction of 1858 ed.), vol.1, p.8; tr. F. Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton, 1980), vol.1, p.15. I have adopted B. Lewis' translation at the beginning of his *Islam* with slight modification.

86. The relevant literature on the subject is quite vast, hence I will confine myself to citing a few. Carr, *What is History?*; H. Meyerhoff, ed. *The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology* (New York, 1959); P. Bagby, *Culture and History: Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Civilizations* (Berkeley, 1963) and J. Lassner, '"Doing" Early Islamic History: Brooklyn Baseball, Arabic Historiography, and Historical Memory,' *JAOS*, 114 (1994), pp.1–10.

17

Purloined Symbols of the Past: The Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and Fatimids

Paul E. Walker

The Fatimids Acquire Dhu'l-Fiqār

In the year 320/932, the rebellious general Mu'nis lured the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir from his palace to his death on a battlefield just outside Baghdad.[1] As often happened in such cases, plundering of the deceased caliph's palace and possessions followed, this time aimed especially against his harem and servants who were thought to have profited excessively from the cupidity of their master. In the midst of this looting, one of the ladies from the dead caliph's harem, at that moment threatened with public exposure or worse, cried out for someone among the mob to shield her and convey her to a place she knew to be safe. One gallant gentleman took pity and answered her plea, telling her to remain closely under his protection until they could reach safety. She responded to his kind offer by declaring that although she possessed nothing to provide him a proper recompense, she could instead

indicate to him that, in such and such an apartment, there was a box in which he would find hidden the fabled sword of the Prophet, Dhu'l-Fiqār – the very one Muḥammad had given to ʿAlī at the Battle of Uḥud. The lady's rescuer subsequently brought both her and the sword safely out of the palace.

What the lady in question possibly did not realize was that the man who just happened to witness this scene of looting and who appeared as her saviour at that timely juncture was himself an Ismaili and an agent of the Fatimid caliph, then ruling in far away North Africa. His acquisition of Dhu'l-Fiqār was thus, in his eyes, partly the work of God; when he sent the sword to his own master, he was, in fact, merely restoring this sacred symbol to its rightful owner, the true heir of both the Prophet and of ʿAlī. Where the Abbasids had once taken it from the Fatimids, now with God's help it was returned to them.[2]

Exactly how Dhu'l-Fiqār got from Baghdad all the way to al-Mahdiyya, we do not know. Still, there is interesting and suggestive evidence of Fatimid activity in Baghdad at the time of the crisis during which it was purportedly recovered. Most importantly, as a result of the same chaos, Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Tamīmī, a captive Fatimid military commander, escaped from an Abbasid prison after fourteen years of detention. He had been a key figure in the campaigns of the future Fatimid Caliph al-Qā'im (322–334/934–946) against Abbasid Egypt at the beginning of the 4th/10th century. These early attempts to extend their control over the Nile failed ironically in large part because of the intervention of Mu'nis, the same general who was later responsibly for al-Muqtadir's deposition and death. In 306/918, Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq had commanded the Fatimid fleet against Egypt but was seized the following year and transported to Baghdad where he suffered for seven years in a miserable underground cell. Later, his situation improved and he was allowed above ground; funds sent surreptitiously by the Fatimid al-Mahdī began to reach him and his jailers. Following liberation in 320/932, he began a long arduous journey back to North Africa, full of perils and risk of recapture.[3] But perhaps he brought with him the then recently recovered sword of the Prophet.

In any case, the first public display of this potent symbol of Shiʿi legitimacy occurred not quite so early as these events but rather at another critical juncture, this time at the lowest ebb of Fatimid fortunes, when the revolt of Abū Yazīd brought this Khārijī rebel near to destroying the Ismaili Fatimid state. At that point, reduced to quasi-imprisonment in their capital city of al-Mahdiyya, al-Qāʾim died. Without announcing the death of his father, the young Ismāʿīl, son of al-Qāʾim and his successor in the Fatimid caliphate, who would later assume the regnal name al-Manṣūr (334–341/946–953), began his own rule by taking personal control of the Fatimid army against the menacing Abū Yazīd, known as the *ṣāḥib al-ḥimār*, the 'Man on the Donkey,' or, as the Fatimids always called him, the Dajjāl, the Arch-Deceiver and Anti-Christ. In the many battles that followed, al-Manṣūr time and time again rode into combat at the head of his forces brandishing Dhu'l-Fiqār, the sword of his two ancestors, the Prophet and ʿAlī.[4] These were stirring epic events and, in the end, al-Manṣūr, 'The Victor,' triumphed completely. Even much later, the memories of those glorious moments reverberated with strong symbolic meaning; those who saw them – the young Imam-caliph and the fabled sword together – never forgot.

Yet others, like the great legal scholar al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, who had not been present in the field, were later allowed a chance to see the sword personally. During an audience with the Fatimid Caliph al-Muʿizz (341–365/953–975), the subject of Dhu'l-Fiqār prompted the caliph to have it brought out and displayed to the assembly. The Qāḍī was moved to write a description of the sword for posterity.[5]

For the Shīʿa, the gift of this sword to ʿAlī by the Prophet forever signified the transfer of power from Muḥammad to his successor, not on the occasion of the battle of Uḥud when it was given, but eventually. It was one sign – yet a key one – among many that ʿAlī had been chosen to succeed and to inherit leadership from Muḥammad. That either the Umayyads or the Abbasids might possess Dhu'l-Fiqār indicated a religious violation of God's intention, a rebellion and disobedience that had to be redressed by the restoration both of the sacred sword and the caliphate-

imamate to the descendants of ʿAlī.[6] The events of the year 320/932 brought that about: the sword came home to its rightful owners. The Fatimids were granted thus an additional marker of their legitimacy and the Abbasids thereby lost one of theirs.

The theft of Dhu'l-Fiqār from Baghdad – though not actually a theft in the eyes of the Fatimids but rather a recovery – viewed as one element in the larger struggle and rivalry between these two claimants to supreme rule over the Muslim community as a whole, represents a minor victory for one side against the other. In truth, the preceding facts may have been known only to the Fatimids for whom, rather than the oblivious Abbasids, its recovery or loss held such importance.[7] Still, the rivalry of these two religious superpowers played out through many similar examples involving stolen objects, sacred relics and souvenirs of power, along, of course, with a constant fight for superiority through rhetorical jab and counter jab, poems of derision against each others' genealogy and lineage, and manifesto against manifesto. To an extent it involved a game of rearranging the past, of the conflict of historical memories and of selective appropriation or degradation. There were, as well, struggles over sacred territory, in addition to the conquering and control of actual lands and political dominions. The prime example here is the Ḥijāz and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Of almost no strategic value and certainly not worth a military campaign, the cities of the Prophet and the birth of Islam held, nonetheless, inestimable symbolic meaning for Muslims. Control of the Ḥijāz, therefore, implied spiritual supremacy; to be recognized in the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*) at Mecca carried enormous value for the Fatimids or conversely for the Abbasids, whichever side should succeed in gaining either it or the meaning it conveyed.

Purloining Relics

Yet another category involves the theft or attempted theft and acquisition of the corpse or bodily members of individuals regarded for one reason with particularly high reverence. In the Christian world the trade in relics of the saints and other holy persons became especially brisk and important. Likewise many

were subject to theft as the competition for ownership and possession of such relics increased. In the early medieval Islamic realm there were fewer examples of bodily relics being moved about but it was not unknown. A famous case in the Fatimid period is, first, the miraculous discovery of the head of Imam Ḥusayn, enshrined at Hebron under the Fatimid commander Badr al-Jamālī and its later removal from there to Cairo by the *wazīr* Ṭalā'iʿ b. Ruzzīk.[8] But, since the Fatimid authorities both 'found' the head in the first place and then moved it, that event in either its initial or later phase does not involve the theft of the object in question, it need not be considered in detail here. More to the point are the various stories put into circulation about Fatimid attempts to steal the Prophet's body from Medina and, though less germane, another that features the Saljūq *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk and Badr al-Jamālī in collusion on a plan to transfer the body of al-Shāfiʿī to Baghdad.

Although there are several accounts to consider, it is obvious that the incident described in each is quite improbable. Both the Fatimid Caliphs al-Ḥākim and al-Ḥāfiẓ, for example, are reported to have sent agents to Medina to steal the Prophet's body surreptitiously. A similar story is told about the Zangid ruler Nūr al-Dīn, who intervened in a timely fashion to prevent a Christian plot of the same kind. In each of these remarkably similar cases, it is the accusation of having attempted the theft in and of itself and not the actual truth, that matters.

One possible impetus for such stories, however, may depend on what is likely a historical reality, that is, al-Ḥākim's dispatching of his agents, under the *dāʿī* Khatkīn al-Ḍayf, to open the house of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in Medina and bring its contents back to Cairo. Versions of the basic account appear in both Egyptian and Eastern sources by among others Ibn al-Jawzī[9] and Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir.[10] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, the Ismaili historian of the Ismaili Imams,[11] also records it, as most significantly, does Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, who was a contemporary.[12] Ibn al-Jawzī's note, recorded under the year 400/1009–10, claims that al-Ḥākim obtained the consent of the ʿAlid *ashrāf* in Medina to open the house with the promise that he only wanted to see what was in it

and that the items would be returned to their original place once they had been brought to Cairo for his inspection. The house had reportedly not been entered since the death of Jaʿfar in 148/765, over 250 years before. But now from it Fatimid agents retrieved a bed (*sarīr*), carpets or mats, utensils and a Qur'an (*maṣḥaf*) which they carried to Cairo accompanied by a delegation of Ḥusaynid and Ḥasanid nobles. In the end al-Ḥākim gave back only the bed and kept the rest, arguing that they were more rightfully his. Idrīs, writing from the Ismaili side, adds the important fact that al-Ḥākim had already known what was in the house and exactly where. He was thus able to instruct his agents accordingly. His knowledge derived from inherited family memory; it was proof of his imamate and his true descent from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

If, then, the preceding event was historical fact, the stories that would enter circulation less than a century later about al-Ḥākim sending his men to tunnel secretly under the tombs of the Prophet and of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in order to steal the remains of all three for reburial in Egypt are hardly credible. But the charge was made nonetheless both in western sources, such as the writings of the Spanish geographer al-Bakrī, and the easterner, Ibn Fahd al-Makkī.[13] Yet why al-Ḥākim even entertained a notion of this kind is difficult to imagine. Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were to many Shīʿa hated villains and great satans. Of what use could their remains be in this situation? And, despite hints that the Fatimids hoped to create a cult centre in Cairo, there is no evidence that they wanted to negate or in any way annul the pilgrimage to the holy cities of the Ḥijāz. The *ḥajj* remained important to them and they went to great lengths to coopt and thus control the ʿAlids who ruled both Mecca and Medina.

But, although an obvious attempt to smear the Fatimids and their Imam-caliph, stories of the same kind were repeated and even readjusted to fit later conditions. According to a record in al-Nuwayrī, the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, frustrated by Abbasid and Saljūq control over the holy cities in the Ḥijāz in his time, contrived a plan whereby he sent as many as forty agents, described as clever and quite capable men, to Medina to steal the Prophet's body and bring it to Cairo. These men set themselves up in Medina

and, to avoid detection, attempted to dig a tunnel to the Prophet's burial place from quite a distance away. They calculated that they could accurately judge exactly at what point to emerge from underground in order to achieve their aim. But, reports al-Nuwayrī, 'God, the exalted, preserved His Prophet from the violation of being moved away from the place that He had chosen for him.' The tunnel the thieves were digging caved in on top of them and they were all destroyed.[14]

One might speculate that some later writers mistook al-Ḥāfiẓ for al-Ḥākim or vice versa, but that does not explain yet another version in which Nūr al-Dīn b. Zangī dreamt that the Prophet called him to Medina to stop the attempt by two Christian spies to dig into his tomb and steal his remains. Nūr al-Dīn rushes off to Medina and with some difficulty finally unmasks the culprits who had been sent there for this evil purpose by a king of Spain. Having uncovered the plot and put to death the perpetrators, the Zangid ruler then fills their tunnel with lead to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.[15]

Thus, at least two of the several versions of such attempts to steal the Prophet's remains have as their real purpose vilifying the Fatimids (although other villains could be used). Another incident is of a similar type but features a quite different object. The perpetrators this time, however, were first the famous Saljūq *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk and second the powerful Fatimid *wazīr* Badr al-Jamālī. In the year 474/1081, so the story goes,[16] Niẓām al-Mulk, then in the process of establishing the Niẓāmiyya, his new *madrasa* in Baghdad, requested Badr in Egypt to exhume for him the body of the jurist al-Shāfiʿī, founder of the Shāfiʿī legal *madhhab*, who was buried in the cemetery to the east of Fusṭāṭ. Niẓām al-Mulk was a Shāfiʿī himself and his *madrasa* was devoted to teaching Shāfiʿī doctrine. Clearly the Fatimids had little regard for this or any Sunni school of law. Therefore Badr, again according to the story, was willing to oblige (although what he might gain from the exhumation is hardly obvious). However, when Badr's men approached the tomb and began to remove some bricks, and just as an opposing crowd of unhappy Egyptians gathered to stone them, a violent odour poured out, enveloped them and prevented

further work. It was a miracle! Badr quickly gave up on the plan. But as a result al-Shāfiʿī's status grew considerably, his prestige with the Egyptians substantially enhanced. Neither the Fatimid *wazīr* nor the eastern Saljūqs could claim him.

The Theft of Symbolic Objects and Souvenirs of Power

In the matters at hand the physical objectification of religious righteousness is especially important. What symbols and souvenirs, relics and reminders did either side value most; which gave them, in their own eyes, superiority through possession? Conversely, given an opportunity, what object did either side choose to steal? In this rivalry the demotion of the opponent is often nearly as useful as the promotion of oneself. The theft of a sacred or symbolic object reduces the power of those who once held it dear and meaningful. The *baraka* it confers no longer supports them; perhaps now it flows instead to its new owner. As in the incident in the Qur'anic story of Sulaymān and Bilqīs, the Queen of Sheba, a physical symbol of power and rule, her throne, must be stolen and thereby diminish or outrightly deny the pretensions of her claim to dominion. Magically, one of Sulaymān's followers delivers the throne to him in an instant; Bilqīs no longer knows her former place. She has been dethroned.[17]

In the examples of purloined insignia that follow here, few possess nearly the same degree of sacrality or magic as either Sulaymān's henchmen or the fabled Dhu'l-Fiqār, or even the remains of the Prophet. Dhu'l-Fiqār, as in the story with which we begin, is almost too perfect an example of a physical symbol of religious legitimacy. Not only is it an ideal whose reality, though symbolically potent, cannot actually be proven, but it involves a sword, an object of almost universal representation in kingship and righteous rule. The same historian who reported the full details of the fate of Dhu'l-Fiqār in its liberation from Abbasid Baghdad and its use by the Fatimid North African caliphs to rally support in the battle against Abū Yazīd provides, in one more of his books, a wonderful and instructive account of yet another example of its (later) legendary role. When the Fatimid Caliph

al-Mustanṣir died in 487/1094, his sons debated amongst themselves who should succeed. In the midst of grave doubt and disagreement, they finally brought out Dhu'l-Fiqār. Each son in turn tried to draw the sword from its scabbard, but only al-Mustaʿlī, the eventual successor, was able to pull it out.[18]

If the following cases do not quite match Dhu'l-Fiqār or the Prophet in spiritual symbolism, they are nevertheless, each in a different way, valid indications of meaning, memories and value in the struggle between the two caliphates. And they involve, by their very nature, markers of legitimacy which, in this rivalry, often carried both religious and political significance together; religion cannot be easily separated from political rule in these cases even where the object stolen and desecrated might also feature in a more profane setting as, for example, might occur in the dynastic conflict between two local contenders for purely territorial kingship.

The next example is a curious mixture of both. By the year 371/981, the earlier willingness of the Būyid ʿAḍud al-Dawla to observe somewhat friendly relations with the Fatimids had given way to fairly stiff hostilities on both sides. The Būyids had a tendency to ignore the Islamic caliphate – even the Abbasids to whom they accorded nominal recognition – in favour of their own notion of a universal kingship, quite possibly modelled on pre-Islamic examples, that called up memories of ancient Iran. Miffed by ʿAḍud al-Dawla's growing pretensions and his liking for the accoutrements of ancient kingly style, such as use of the title Shāhanshāh, 'King of Kings,' the Fatimid al-ʿAzīz found some bold and clever men to journey to Baghdad that year and steal the silver lion figure from the prow of the Būyid's personal river craft (*zabzab*). The people, reports the historian, were duly amazed and quite impressed by this audacious, public affront to ʿAḍud al-Dawla's overweening pride and arrogant irreverence for the imamate.[19]

Following chronological order, the next incident falls in the year 381, and, like the situation in 320, is connected to disorder in Baghdad that resulted from the deposition of one Abbasid and his replacement by another. In that year the caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ was

done away with by the Būyid Bahā' al-Dawla and there was considerable looting of the palace and caliphal possessions.[20] Naturally, the Fatimids again benefited from the chaos; it is likely that they were well represented in Baghdad by agents of various kinds. Objects were certainly stolen from the Abbasids on that occasion and conveyed to Cairo. The evidence here, however, is not from a direct report recorded at the time but from a much later mention of how the same (or some of the same) objects found their way back to Baghdad. A virtually identical report occurs in the histories of Ibn Ẓāfir, Ibn Muyassar and Ibn al-Athīr. Ibn Muyassar's version runs as follows:

> And [in the year 462] a number of merchants arrived in Baghdad carrying with them garments belonging to al-Mustanṣir along with various of his treasures and his goods and *splendid items that had once been taken from Baghdad as loot at the time of the deposition of al-Ṭā'iʿ li'llāh in the year 381*. They also had some of what was taken as loot during the incident of al-Basāsīrī.[21]

Ibn Ẓāfir specifies that these object had been looted from the palace (*al-qaṣr*); Ibn al-Athīr says it was the seat of the caliphate (*dār al-khilāfa*); and Ibn Ẓāfir adds that thereupon 'God restored it to its true owners' (*faraddahu allāhu ilā arbābihi*).[22]

Unfortunately, the information on the items from the looting of 381/991–92 is scant.[23] Ibn al-Athīr does give a short list of objects but they may be from the later plunder of al-Basāsīrī, or from the mass of goods taken in 461–62/1068–70 from al-Mustanṣir's own palace treasuries in yet another incidents to be discussed below. As this case illustrates, however, several examples of purloining involved the chance looting by agents, representatives, or partisans of one side against the other. The flow of such objects readily passed back and forth and in some situations obviously the intermediaries were merchants and brokers who merely knew where to obtain the best price for an item that had once belonged to one of the opposing caliphs.[24]

But in many ways these objects held a special value as souvenirs of the opposition, now owned by the opposing party as a sign of the other's loss of respect and worth. A different example involves a pair of incidents that each feature gifts and insignia sent by the

caliphs to curry favour and which subsequently fell into the hands of the enemy.

The first concerns the famous pilgrimage of Ḥasanak in 414/1024. For the years 410 and 411/1020–21, the Khurāsānīs failed to reach Mecca; the route there was always difficult and treacherous in this period due to the predatory raiding and constant extortion by Arab tribes along the way. The pilgrimage for 413/1023 was fairly successful, however, although there were reports of conflict between the Egyptians and Khurāsānīs that year in Mecca itself.[25] For 414/1024, the Khurāsānīs made a special effort, aided in part by funds granted by important people. They also enlisted as their leader the *amīr* Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan b. Muḥammad who was known by the name Ḥasanak. He was not only wealthy and powerful but also a close associate or protégé of the Ghaznawid Sultan Maḥmūd. Once in Baghdad the Khurāsānī caravan joined with the Iraqis, themselves under the leadership of the ʿAlid Abu'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Aqsāsī. Together they reached Mecca and then Medina but at that point realized that the normal return route to Baghdad had become blocked. In the midst of this crisis, having with them some 60,000 camels and 200,000 people, they decided to proceed from Medina by way of the Wadī al-Qurā to Ayla and from Ayla to Ramla and thence back to Baghdad through Syria. With so large a party, it would have been folly to invade Fatimid Syria without the explicit permission and the good will of its ruler.

As will shortly become apparent, this incident soon became a matter of intense dispute and, even later still, was used as an excuse to condemn Ḥasanak and bring about his execution. Nevertheless, the exact evidence of what happened, as depicted in the eastern sources, especially for the Ghaznawids, is rather brief. In Fatimid sources, by contrast, there is much more and, luckily, a key contemporary report survives. Moreover, in this case, it occurs in the court chronicle by the *amīr* al-Musabbiḥī. Though for the most part lost, one precious section of his history of Egypt is extant and it deals by chance with the key months of the years 414 and 415/1023–24. Al-Maqrīzī, who certainly consulted al-

Musabbiḥī, also adds information that must derive from yet another source. Both accounts should be read together.[26]

Al-Maqrīzī reports that it was al-Aqsāsī who wrote to the Fatimid caliph seeking permission to cross Syria. Since this man represented the ʿAlids of Baghdad as well as the Abbbasid caliph, Cairo, in expectation of favourable propaganda, was only too glad to comply. The Fatimid Caliph al-Ẓāhir (411–427/1021–1036) ordered his military governors and allies in Syria to extend to the pilgrims the finest hospitality, complete with provisions for both humans and their beasts. Ibn al-Athīr reports that the ruler of Egypt gave each man in the group a goodly sum of money so that the people of Khurāsān would hear of his generosity.[27] It was duly noted, moreover, that this occasion provided a wonderful opportunity for this huge party to extend their pilgrimage by a visit to Jerusalem. As a result of this grand gesture, al-Musabbiḥī adds, all and sundry departed for their distant homes afterward well pleased, full of praise, fine memories, and thankful for the beneficence of the Fatimid caliph.[28]

Although al-Aqsāsī played the leading role, noted just now according to the Egyptian sources, there is no doubt that the Fatimid caliph understood also the position of Ḥasanak and exactly who he was and who he represented. Maḥmūd of Ghazna had been the implacable enemy of the Ismailis in his territories and elsewhere; many of them had been killed by him. That his representative was now at the mercy of the Fatimids and asking for their help was taken as a sign of his possible friendship, a turnabout perhaps. When an ambassador from Ḥasanak arrived in Cairo, the caliph al-Ẓāhir staged a grand, full-dress convocation of the court to impress him and his young son. He, on his part, brought as a gift for the caliph fifteen she-camels laden with valuable commodities.[29] For his part al-Ẓāhir gave, says al-Maqrīzī, to al-Aqsāsī a thousand dinars and a great number of garments. He also gave Ḥasanak a similar set of gifts among which was a *khilʿa*, a special robe of honour. To him he conveyed as well a horse fitted out with golden trappings.[30] There were also letters and gifts to be carried on to Maḥmūd.

Although quite necessary in view of the circumstances, this lit-

tle dalliance with the Fatimids was deeply troubling to the Abbasid caliph. Ḥasanak, sensing danger, avoided Baghdad and returned directly to Khurāsān where he reported what had transpired to his master without immediate consequence. The rage of al-Qādir in Baghdad only increased, however; what his rival al-Ẓāhir had done infuriated him beyond measure. He lashed out against al-Aqsāsī and had him arrested,[31] and he wrote to Maḥmūd demanding from him the horse, the clothes and the *khilʿa*[32] that had been given to Ḥasanak. They were to be brought to Baghdad for desecration and burning. Though Maḥmūd thought al-Qādir a doddering old fool, he complied. Al-Qādir assembled the masses of Baghdad, burned the items in question in front of all, and dedicated the gold from them for the poor by distributing it to them forthwith.[33] Thereby, comments al-Maqrīzī, al-Ẓāhir, despite having shown them generosity and having made it possible for them to visit Jerusalem, was robbed of the praises of those same Khurāsānī and Transoxianian pilgrims.[34] The Abbasid caliph had made sure that good memories turned bitter.

The Fatimids never forgot this indignity. Some twenty-seven years later they found an opportunity for revenge in kind. In 443/1051, al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs, the Zīrid ruler of North Africa, suffered one of several fits of pique at his Fatimid overlords and renounced his allegiance to them. He then sent an ambassador to Baghdad to proclaim his adherence to the Abbasids and to request a suitable acknowledgment of that fact from them. Baghdad was only too happy to respond favourably. A diploma of investiture (*ʿahd al-wilāya*), a black banner (*liwāʾ aswad*) and a *khilʿa* were prepared immediately, and an ambassador chosen to carry them to the Zīrid al-Muʿizz. The Abbasid ambassador, Abū Ghālib al-Shīrāzī, however, faced an unenviable task: he had to transport a load of gifts plus these special objects, notably the *khilʿa* and the black banner – the latter being the quintessential trademark of the Abbasids – to far away North Africa, possibly by having to pass directly through Fatimid territory. That surely would have been outright folly. Even if the black banner could be folded and concealed, Fatimid spies in Baghdad were obviously fully aware of the embassy and its purpose. Abū Ghālib decided to avoid this problem by going north

into Byzantium and proceeding from there to Ifrīqiya. The Byzantines, however, stopped him and the emperor Constantine IX had him arrested.

According to al-Maqrīzī, who provides the greatest detail about this event, there was some to-do in Constantinople about this matter. Ambassadors from al-Muʿizz and the Saljūq Sultan Ṭughril Beg tried unsuccessfully to plead for release of the Abbasid representative. Constantine was at that moment, however, quite disposed to uphold the cause of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir with whom he then had friendly relations. The timely arrival of a Fatimid ambassador with impressive gifts certainly also helped decide the issue. Abū Ghālib and all he carried with him were sent off to Cairo, the Abbasid ambassador to be publicly displayed and humiliated, and the objects he brought with him to be ceremonially desecrated and burned. The Fatimids gleefully excavated a small trench in the open area 'between the two palaces' (*bayna'l-qaṣrayn*), summoned the people and burned the diploma, the black banner and, most pointedly, the *khilʿa,* just as, report the Arab historians, the Abbasid al-Qādir had done in the case of the *khilʿa* that al-Mustanṣir's father al-Ẓāhir had given to Ḥasanak.[35] Though separated by almost thirty years, memories of the earlier affront to their dignity remained alive and fresh down to the details.

This auspicious riposte was followed a few years later by the crowning success of the Fatimids. In 450/1058, the Turkish adventurer, Arslān al-Basāsīrī, supported by Arab tribal allies and money and arms sent from Cairo, seized Baghdad, looted the caliphal palaces, nullified the Abbasid caliphate, and proclaimed al-Mustanṣir and the Fatimids supreme.[36] He also technically thereafter held the former Abbasid caliph al-Qā'im himself a prisoner. In actuality, however, al-Basāsīrī allowed one of his allies to take possession of al-Qā'im, and the latter held him during the interim, in part, as a prudent precaution for his own future safety. The Abbasid caliph (and his caliphate) was thus preserved, even while he was himself under the detention of his enemies.

Al-Basāsīrī's activities on behalf of the Fatimids were long anticipated and quite possibly even planned by them. Al-Mustanṣir was, at first, overjoyed with the result. From the loot, al-Basāsīrī

selected many notable and symbolic objects for dispatch to Cairo. Those mentioned by al-Maqrīzī are a *mindīl* (a turban) belonging to al-Qā'im with which he had attired himself with his own hands (it had been fashioned on a mold of marble to prevent it from becoming unknotted), a cloak (*ridā'*) of his, and the lattice screen (*shubbāk*) behind which he had reclined. These clearly possessed special meaning because of their close (personal?) identification with the Abbasid caliph. Al-Mustanṣir went out of his way to have them housed in Cairo at the Dār al-Wuzarā'. There they remained until the end of the Fatimid state when, according to al-Maqrīzī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn took possession of the palaces and sent the turban and cloak back to Baghdad. At that time Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn also returned a document that al-Qā'im had been forced to write against his own interest in which he testified that the Abbasids held no right to the caliphate over the descendants of Fāṭima. The screen (*shubbāk min al-ḥadīd*) is reported to have been acquired by the Fatimid *wazīr* al-Afḍal who had it built into his official residence. Much later it was taken from the ruins of this building by Baybars al-Jashankīr for his tomb.[37] Al-Maqrīzī reports further that the loot that reached Cairo following al-Basāsīrī's victory included a great deal of treasure, books and other precious objects.[38] Various authorities obviously still remembered exactly which items were involved.

When al-Mustanṣir first learned that he had been recognized as caliph in Baghdad, he was naturally extremely pleased but, when he realized that his Abbasid rival was not out of the picture, his mood began to change. At first he sent an offer of 10,000 dinars to Muhāris, the nephew of Quraysh, al-Basāsīrī's ally who now controlled al-Qā'im, to have him send the Abbasid caliph to Cairo. The ultimate souvenir of the Abbasids would have been the dethroned caliph in person. Apparently, al-Mustanṣir conceived at the time grand plans for the generous treatment of al-Qā'im. He was to have his own palace, a sumptuous allowance of one hundred dinars a day, and he would ride before al-Mustanṣir in all the processions of the Fatimid caliph. Yet another option was to reinstall him in Iraq as a vassal of the Fatimid empire.[39] None of this came to fruition, of course.

The adventure of al-Basāsīrī, though it brought recognition to the Fatimids for forty consecutive Fridays in the mosques of Baghdad, was doomed early in the game. The Saljūq onslaught that al-Basāsīrī and his supporter wished to prevent arrived despite them. In short order Ṭughril Beg reclaimed the initiative and swept all before him. He restored al-Qā'im to his throne in Baghdad and began actively to reverse the damage done to the prestige of them both. Already, in Cairo, there were those who feared the worst; support in Egypt for al-Basāsīrī had dissipated even as he triumphed. It had been a costly, pyrrhic victory at best. It is nevertheless intriguing to speculate about what might have happened. Obviously, the ultimate in purloining insignia would have been the capture and transportation to Cairo of the Abbasid caliph in person. Al-Mustanṣir, however, may not have realized that the Abbasid ruler could be easily replaced by another from his family. Many Abbasids were deposed, as had been al-Muqtadir and al-Ṭā'iʿ in 320/932 and 381/991 respectively. The Fatimid caliphs, by contrast, could not be deposed by any one but God; if al-Mustanṣir were to have been captured, he would retain nonetheless the imamate until his death.

Although he was thus secure in his own imamate, al-Mustanṣir's governing powers never again reached as far as they had on this one relatively brief occasion. His control over his empire declined rapidly following the defeat of al-Basāsīrī. Even Egypt slipped slowly from central regulation as conditions throughout the country deteriorated over the next decade. What followed was labelled the time of hardship, the *ayyām al-shidda*, or simply social and governmental collapse, the *fitna*.[40] At the worst period of subsequent famine and chaos, even al-Mustanṣir's family began to leave Egypt, or perhaps to be deliberately asked to find a better or safer residence. At the height of the disorder in 461/1068–69, al-Mustanṣir had no means to pay his troops or even the officials in the government. In desperation the palace treasuries were opened one by one and their contents traded off in place of salaries. There exists a fairly lengthy account of the marvellous items brought out of the palace during this period. Most of the soldiers and many of the government officials simply sold what they took in lieu of salary

to local merchants and dealers in precious objects. Their value in Cairo would have quickly declined as the market became flooded. Merchants, say contemporary reports, began arriving in Baghdad with all manner of objects – clothes, jewels, books, carpets, along with members – mother and daughters – of the Fatimid caliph's own family. Many of these same objects were recognized or were known to have been previously taken from Abbasid palaces, either during the transition after al-Ṭā'iʿ or at the time of al-Basāsīrī.[41]

Thus, if the earlier years of the Fatimids witnessed their gain and advantage as registered in the theft of symbolic objects of legitimacy and prestige, the later period saw the reverse. Although not until the victory of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn did complete restoration occur for the Abbasids, from the time of these troubles under al-Mustanṣir, the balance had clearly turned against the Fatimids.

The cases of purloined relics, insignia and souvenirs of power just discussed are all, or nearly all, of those recorded in our sources. However, they are surely not the only ones that occurred. Nevertheless, they are enough to reveal interesting patterns and themes in the rivalry between the Abbasids and the Fatimids. Two of them, the first and the second – the theft of Dhu'l-Fiqār and the attempted theft of the physical remains of the Prophet – concern symbolic objects that possess a high degree of obvious sanctity in religious terms. Yet neither appears to be more real than legendary. The purported attempt to steal Muḥammad's body from Medina sounds, in fact, simply fanciful. It is more likely to be an account concocted by the detractors of the Fatimids to discredit them than an actual event. Even a historian like al-Nuwayrī seems to mistrust the story he himself reports; significantly he does not name his source. The other examples illustrate a variety of less spectacular but, often, more real purloining.

In these latter situations, as in the case of Ḥasanak's *khilʿa*, public desecration is clearly central for objects having the power to endow honour. Ceremonial destruction is essential to negate that power and to ensure that no one else acquires or thinks to acquire that distinction. By burning the object, the source from which its status flows loses its power to confer honour. At an even lower

level, the act of taking the silver lion figure from ʿAḍud al-Dawla was a clever and audacious retort but not one of high religious significance. Yet it does provide evidence for the active pursuit and defence of caliphal prerogative by means of the theft of status symbols. The looting of palaces was often more mundanely profitable than symbolically valuable. Still, the difference between profane and sacred in these situations depends on intangible meaning. Memories can be stolen, appropriated or desecrated in tandem with the fate of the souvenirs that serve to bring it back into focus. Objects that confer legitimacy may do so merely because they belong, or once belonged, to a person whose sanctity inheres in his possessions as well as in himself. Theft is a violation in and of itself. Just as power accrues through possession, it diminishes in proportion to each item lost. In a rivalry such as this, where religious authority and political rule are inseparable, the acquisition or nullification of sanctity and legitimacy depend on factors often not readily apparent except to those intimately involved. Therefore, what one side chose to take from the other through an overt act of de-possession surely indicates, at a minimum, both what the violated party considered meaningful and memorable, as well as what the violator thought worth the effort to steal, if not monetarily then symbolically.

Notes

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1. On al-Muqtadir and Mu'nis, see K.V. Zetterstéen and C.E. Bosworth, 'al-Muḳtadir bi-llāh, Abu'l-Faḍl Djaʿfar' and H. Bowen, 'Mu'nis al-Muẓaffar,' *EI2*, vol.7, pp.541–542, 575.

2. The story related here naturally comes from Fatimid Ismaili sources. The primary account derives from al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's *al-Majālis wa'l-musāyarāt,* ed. al-Ḥabīb al-Faqī, Ibrāhīm Shabbūḥ and Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī (Tunis, 1978), p.114, and reappears in Idrīs' *ʿUyūn al-akhbār.* For the latter, one should use the edition by Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī

entitled *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā' al-Fāṭimiyyīn bi'l-Maghrib: al-qism al-khāṣṣ min Kitāb ʿuyūn al-akhbār* (Beirut, 1985) which supersedes the other editions of this part. Idrīs (pp.232–233) takes the report of al-Nuʿmān and places it in the context of al-Muqtadir's murder as described here. No Abbasid source, as far as I know, mentions anything about the sword in connection with this exact incident although the danger to al-Muqtadir's harem and the looting of his womenfolk and servants is well known. However, the *Kitāb al-hadāyā wa'l-tuḥaf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh (Kuwait, 1950) (*Book of Gifts and Rarities*, tr. al-Qaddūmī [Cambridge, MA, 1996], pp.190–191) contains a fairly explicit reference to its being among the possessions of the Abbasid caliph al-Rāḍī in 329/941, nine years later. Al-Rāḍī succeeded al-Qāhir who had come to power following al-Muqtadir.

3. See *ʿUyūn al-akhbār,* pp.234–236. Subsequent references to this work for this period are to al-Yaʿlāwī's edition, cited by actual page numbers in the printed version and not the numbers used by the editor for cross referencing and the index.

4. *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, pp.361, 362, 374, 376, 377, 390, 395, 400, 408, 410, 412, 413, and 420. The last citation here is to the text of a sermon (*khuṭba*) delivered by al-Manṣūr upon his victory over Abū Yazīd in which he refers pointly to his father al-Qā'im as the 'heir of the sword of his ancestor, Dhu'l-Fiqār (*wārith sayf jaddihi dhi'l-fiqār*).' Note also p.449 and the involved story on pp.732–735 that al-Nuʿmān related about a dream of the Fatimid Caliph al-Muʿizz concerning a battle by his son against the Qarmaṭians which took place after his arrival in Egypt. In the latter al-Muʿizz is visited and aided by his ancestors and their swords including ʿAlī and Dhu'l-Fiqār. The campaign of al-Manṣūr against Abū Yazīd is covered fully by H. Halm in his *Das Reich des Mahdi* (Munich, 1991), pp.276–289; English tr. M. Bonner, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden, 1996), pp.310–326. References to Dhu'l-Fiqār occur on pp.279 and 284–285; trans. pp.313 and 319–320.

5. *Kitāb al-majālis*, p.114. Al-Nuʿmān provides a fairly detailed description of the sword. See the discussion by Halm, *Reich*, pp.313–314, trans., p.353.

6. Obviously any mention or use of the sword evoked powerful memories of the Prophet and, particularly for the Shīʿa, of ʿAlī. For an explicit discussion of its importance, from the Fatimid imam's perspective, in the designation of ʿAlī, see the comments of al-Muʿizz reported by al-Nuʿmān (*Kitāb al-majālis*, pp.208–209): only ʿAlī and the Prophet ever used the sword; its symbolic value was immense while its physical worth was slight.

7. Note again the existence of the evidence, cited above, that the Abbasids were still able to maintain that they possessed Dhu'l-Fiqār. For at least one non-Ismaili source that reports Fatimid possession of the sword, see Ibn Ḥammād, *Histoire des Rois 'Obaïdides* (*Akhbār mulūk Banī 'Ubayd wa-sīratihum*), ed. and tr. M. Vonderheyden (Algiers and Paris, 1927), pp.24–25 (al-Manṣūr announces that he has been given Dhu'l-Fiqār by his father).

8. On this see now Daniel de Smet, 'La translation du *ra's al-Ḥusayn* au Caire Fatimide,' in U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet, ed. *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, II (Louvain, 1998), pp.29–44.

9. *Al-Muntaẓam fi ta'rīkh al-mulūk wa'l-umam* (Hyderabad, 1939), vol.7, p.246. See also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira* (Cairo, 1348–91/1929–72), vol.4, p.222, and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–76; repr. Beirut, 1965–67), vol.9, p.219.

10. *Al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya al-zāhira fi khiṭaṭ al-muʿizziyya al-Qāhira*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1996), p.40. Virtually the same information appears in al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* (Būlāq, 1270/1853–54), vol.1, p.453.

11. *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1984), vol.6, p.288. Idrīs assigns the event to the year 410/1019–20 which must be a mistake for 400/1009–10 and credits his information to al-Sharīf al-Ḥimyarī al-Ḥusaynī's *Kitāb al-maʿrūf bi-Kanz al-akhbār fi'l-siyar wa'l-akhbār.*

12. The incident is mentioned in his as yet unpublished *Tanbīh al-hādī wa'l-mustahdī* (p.234 of ms. 723 belonging to The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London).

13. On this claim and the various versions of it, see the study by Yūsuf Rāġib, 'Un épisode obscur d'histoire Fatimide,' *Studia Islamica*, 48 (1978), pp.125–132. See also Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Societies* (New York, 1995), pp.35–38.

14. *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, vol.28, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad (Cairo, 1992), p.308.

15. On this episode, see Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ al-ẓuhūr* (Wiesbaden, 1975), vol.1, p.241; Marmon, *Eunuchs*, pp.35–38, and Rāġib, 'Episode,' pp.129–130.

16. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol.2, p.462, and Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *La Capitale de l'Égypte jusqu'à l'époque Fatimide al-Qāhira et al-Fusṭāṭ: Essai de reconstitution topographique* (Beirut, 1998), pp.446–447.

17. Qur'an 27: 22–42.

18. For some unspecified reason, this story appears in Idrīs' *Zahr al-maʿānī*, a purportedly esoteric work, and not in his previously cited *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, presumably an exoteric work. See W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition*

Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids (London, etc., 1942), p.5 and A.A.A. Fyzee's introduction to his edition of the *Hidāyat al-Āmiriyya* (London etc., 1938), p.15. The *Zahr al-maʿānī* itself was not available to me.

19. On the general policy of the Būyids, see Wilferd Madelung, 'The Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh by the Būyids and the Reign of the Daylam (*Dawlat al-Daylam*),' *JNES*, 28 (1969), pp.84–108 and 168–183. For Fatimid policy with respect to the Būyids, see Shainool Jiwa, 'Fāṭimid-Būyid Diplomacy during the Reign of al-ʿAzīz Billāh (365/975–386/996),' *JIS*, 3 (1992), pp.57–71. More specifically, for the details surrounding this particular incident, see Heribert Busse, 'The Revival of Persian Kingship under the Būyids,' in D.S. Richards, ed. *Islamic Civilization, 950–1150* (Oxford, 1973), pp.47–69, especially p.61. Although the theft is reported by both Ibn al-Jawzī (*al-Muntaẓam*, vol.7, p.107) and al-Maqrīzī (*Itiʿāẓ al-ḥunafāʾ*, vol.1, ed. al-Shayyāl, p.261) and is thus not in dispute, either as to its actually happening or its general significance, the exact nature of the object stolen has caused considerable confusion. This problem stems from difficulties in the Arabic text in both sources. A *zabzab* (plural, *zabāzib*) is a reasonably well known kind of river gondola used fairly extensively by important figures (including caliphs) in and about Baghdad during the 4th and 5th/10th-11th centuries. See Darwīsh al-Nukhaylī, *al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya ʿalā ḥurūf al-muʿjam* (Alexandria, 1974), pp.54–57. (His version of the crucial passage is found on pp.55–57.) When Adam Mez first cited this evidence, he correctly inferred that the text must have read, in part, ''*alā ṣadr zabzab ʿaḍud al-dawla* there was a silver lion (figure)' although he actually says, 'Sultan 'Adudeddaulah hatte am Stern seiner Gondel (zabzab) einen silbernen Löwen' (*Die Renaissance des Islâm* [Heidelberg, 1922], p.2–3). Bukhsh and Margoliouth (*The Renaissance of Islam*, p.3) translate this 'Sultan Adad-ud-Dowlah had a silver lion affixed to the stern of his gondola in Baghdad.' Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīda's Arabic translation (*al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmiyya fi'l-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī* (Cairo, 1947), p.3, reads, '*kāna ʿalā ṣadri zabzab li'l-sulṭān ʿaḍud al-dawla ṣūratun li-sabʿin min al-fiḍḍa.*' That is likely what the Arabic text of either original source should have read as well. (Obviously *ṣadr* refers to the prow of the boat rather than the stern.) The general confusion about the meaning of this text first arose, however, because al-Maqrīzī's manuscript has, according to al-Shayyāl, *ṣuwar*, in place of *ṣadr* although that is likely to be the result of a simple scribal slip and al-Shayyāl was perfectly right to correct it, which he did, citing Mez (in Arabic). The text of Ibn al-Jawzī is more difficult. He has '*kāna ʿalā ṣadr ʿaḍud al-dawla zabzab ʿalā ṣūrat al-sabʿi min al-fiḍḍa.*' Due to the obvious

difficulty of the text, Busse, although citing Mez, would have the item in question be a pectoral in the shape of a *zabzab* with the image of a lion on it. He suggests amending the second *ʿalā* to read *ʿalayhi*. And he says '...the meaning of the passage becomes clear: There was on ʿAḍud al-Dawla's breast a *zabzab* [=a pectoral in the shape of a boat]; a lion was represented on it, [the pectoral] was made of silver.' (Bracketing by Busse.) Busse evidently had not seen the reference in al-Maqrīzī and al-Shayyāl's emendation of the text there.

Busse, I think, strains too hard to force the text to say what it does not. The figure of the lion was obviously either sitting on the prow of the boat or was actually a part of the prow. It was thus far more visible to the public than any pectoral possibly worn by ʿAḍud al-Dawla. Why, in any case, should such a pectoral be described as being like a *zabzab*? It would most certainly be an odd choice of descriptive terms. On the contrary prow figures on boats were common especially in ancient times. A relief from Khorsabad shows river boats with prominent horsehead figures on their bowsprits. A battle scene from Madinet Habu depicts Ramsses III's army fighting the Sea People in boats that have lion heads on their prows (and each lion has an Asiatic head firmly gripped in its jaws.) In these two examples, one from Iraq and one from Egypt, the figure is a part (the cap) of the bowsprit. There are, however, other examples where the lion figure sits on the prow instead. See for examples Björn Landström, *Ships of the Pharaohs* (New York, 1970), pp.105, 109, 117, 121 and 131. (For other types of figures, see pp.140, 121, 119; the lion bowsprit of Ramsses is depicted on pp.111–113).

20. See the report of Ibn al-Jawzī (*al-Muntaẓam*, vol.7, pp.156–58). Ibn Miskawayh says he prefers not to discuss the sordid details of this transition.

21. Ibn Muyassar, *al-Muntaqā min Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1981), p.36.

22. Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār al-duwal al-munqaṭiʿa*, ed. A. Ferré (Cairo, 1972), p.75; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol.10, p.61. The last comment by Ibn Ẓāfir may well refer to a specific item that al-Basāsīrī had sent to al-Mustanṣir. See also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol.26, p.68, and vol.28, p.233. For more on the latter incident see below.

23. Yet one more report, mentioned by R.B. Serjeant in his *Islamic Textiles* (Beirut, 1972), p.110, citing Ibn Taghrībirdī (ed. Popper, vol.2, p.181) concerns a collection of Abbasid garments that the Fatimids obtained from Bahā' al-Dawla's plundering of the Dār al-Khilāfa in 381/991.

24. One example is from the *Book of Gifts*: 'Al-Ḥāfir, a ruby stone that weighed seven dirhams, passed from the Abbasids to the Fatimid caliphs in Egypt' (*Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, p.192, trans al-Qaddūmī, p.193). There are others as well.

25. See, for example, the *Book of Gifts* (*Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, pp.193–194, trans. p.193). Now see also Heinz Halm, 'Der Tod Ḥamzas, des Begründers der drusischen Religion,' in U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet, ed. *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras,* II, pp.105–113.

26. Al-Musabbiḥī, *al-Juz' al-arbaʿūn min Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. A.F. Sayyid and Th. Bianquis (Cairo, 1978), pp.22–23 and 28–29; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, ed. Aḥmad, pp.137–139. It should be noted that there are several errors in this section of this edition of the *Ittiʿāẓ*. Maḥmūd's honorific name is not 'Ayn al-Dawla but Yamīn al-Dawla, for example. For the eastern sources, consult Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol.8, p.16; Bayhaqī, pp.181–183 (= H.M. Elliott and John Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*; vol.2, *The Muhammadan Period*, pp.91–93); 'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī, *Kitāb zayn al-akhbār*, ed. M. Nāẓim (Berlin, 1928), pp.96–97; C.E. Bosworth, *Ghaznavids* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp.182–184.

27. *Al-Kāmil*, vol.9, p.340.

28. Al-Musabbiḥī, *Akhbār Miṣr*, pp.22–23. Al-Musabbiḥī concludes this entry by saying, '*wakāna dhalika min ḥusni tawfīq Allāh li-hādhihi'l-dawlati wa min saʿādatihi.*'

29. Ibid., p.29, refered to as '*al-rasūl al-ʿajamī al-muqaddam dhikruhu.*'

30. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, p.138.

31. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol.9, p.340, says that [al-Aqsāsī] thereafter took sick and died.

32. A *khilʿa* is a ceremial robe that confers distinction and special regard on the recipient. They were often quite lavish and covered with gold embroidery. See N.A. Stillman, 'Khilʿa,' *EI2*, vol.5, pp.6–7. The author in fact includes there a copy of a painting of Maḥmūd donning a *khilʿa*.

33. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol.9, p.350 (under the year 416/1025–26) and al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, pp.137–139.

34. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, p.139.

35. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, pp.11–12; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol.28, p.219 and al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, p.214. Although al-Maqrīzī's account includes a version given by Ibn Muyassar, he provides additional facts as well. It might be noted that after the ceremonies, al-Mustanṣir relented and sent the Abbasid ambassador back to Constantinople. For

the cause of al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs' disaffection, see al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ,* vol.2, pp.214ff; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār*, pp.69–71; H.R. Idris, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Zīrīdes, X-XII siècles* (Paris, 1962), pp.127–142; and the other citations provided by A. F. Sayyid in the note 40 to his edition of Ibn Muyassar, pp.11–12.

36. The basic details of these events in Iraq appear in numerous sources as, for example, in Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol.9, pp.641f, and Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl taʾrīkh Dimashq*, ed. H.F. Amedroz (Leiden, 1908), pp.81–90, but the eastern historians do not mention the objects that were sent to Cairo. For them consult al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, pp.252–255.

37. See A. Fuʾād Sayyid, *La Capitale*, p.469, citing al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, p.439, and vol.2, p.416, and M. Canard, 'Le Cérémonial Fatimite et le cérémonial Byzantin: Essai de comparaison,' *Byzantion,* 21 (1951), p.361.

38. Specifically, here, *al-dhakhāʾir waʾl-kutub waʾl-qaḍīb waʾl-burda, Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, p.253. The latter two items, if the reading is correct, are not easily identified. Is the *qaḍīb* a sceptre, for example, or a bow or a sword? Is the *burda* a special item, as for example the famous *burda* of the Prophet? There is a short list of objects from this loot in the *Kitāb al-dhakhāʾir*, pp.195–196; see also trans. paragraphs nos 256–260.

39. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.2, pp.254–255.

40. For the most complete account of this period see al-Maqrīzī's *Ittiʿāẓ*. He, for example, provides a long description of the looting of al-Mustanṣir's treasuries, including lists of items taken (vol.2, pp.279–301). Some of the same objects are described in the *Kitāb al-dhakhāʾir waʾl-tuḥaf*, although whether what we have of this book is identical with al-Maqrīzī's source is not clear.

41. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol.10, p.61; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār*, p.75, and Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, p.36.

18

Conceptions of Authority and the Transition of Shi'ism from Sectarian to National Religion in Iran

Saïd Amir Arjomand

Wilferd Madelung has offered us a magisterial overview of the development of the idea of authority in Twelver Shi'ism.[1] The present paper is narrower in its temporal scope but is more broadly based on source materials that are not confined to jurisprudence and include works on statecraft and political ethics as well. The tension between nomocracy and Mahdism, or more loosely speaking, chiliasm, was arguably crucial in determining the path of development of Shi'ism in general and the conception of authority in particular. The resolution of this tension through the formulation of the doctrine of occultation made possible the emergence of a stable system of hierocratic authority based on rational jurisprudence, even if it did not preclude periodic outbursts of Mahdistic charismatic authority.[2] As Madelung shows, the first stage of the development of hierocratic authority was completed by the end of the Būyid period or shortly thereafter in the 5th/11th century. From a broader perspective, that century

also marked the development of a conception of political authority in relation to Islamic law that was common to Sunni and Imāmī (Twelver) Muslims. Although this similarity can be demonstrated by considering works in jurisprudence, such as the important tract by the Sayyid al-Murtaḍā (d.436/1044) published by Madelung,[3] we also need to look at other sources because political authority was typically treated in books on ethics and statecraft, a literary genre distinct from religious jurisprudence.

The bifurcation of political authority into caliphate and sultanate after the Būyid seizure of Baghdad resulted in a distinct mode of justification of political authority in terms of the necessity of maintenance of public order through the enforcement of the *sharīʿa*. This mode of derivation of 'the necessity of the imamate' is common to the Sunni and Shiʿi jurists of the Būyid period alike; and, in both cases, it results in the severing of the link between, on the one hand, the necessity of upholding the Islamic norms and the legitimacy or qualification of the ruler, on the other.[4] The great Shiʿi doctors of the Mongol period, the Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d.676/1277) and his nephew, the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d.726/1325), displayed the same attitude towards public authority as their Būyid predecessors. Neither of these doctors wrote political tracts of the literary or philosophical genre, but this had been done, magisterially, by the ʿAllāma's teacher, Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d.672/1274).

To construct the classical Islamic political order, two sources other than the Qur'an and the Prophetic heritage had been drawn upon. Both practically or administratively and intellectually, Muslim thinkers drew on the Greek and the Persian traditions. It is not accidental that the words denoting public law from the earliest times to the present, *qānūn* and *dastūr*, are respectively from Greek and Persian provenance. At the intellectual level, too, statecraft (*siyāsat*) was a Persian craft while practical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*) came from the Greeks. The blending of these two traditions produced the classical science of civic politics (*al-siyāsa al-madaniyya; siyāsat-i mudun*), which is the subject of the third discourse of al-Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*.

I

We can find elements of a dress rehearsal for the transition of Shiʿism from a sectarian religion to the national religion of Iran during the 8th/14th century. Through their connection with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, who was the Mongol conqueror's councillor, the Shiʿi notables of Ḥilla and the Shiʿi vizier of the last Abbasid Caliph, Ibn al-ʿAlqamī, secretly submitted to the invading Mongols and accepted office under the Mongol regime.[5] One of them, Raḍī al-Dīn b. Ṭāwūs, played the leading part in a gathering of the *ʿulamāʾ* in the Mustanṣiriyya Madrasa in Baghdad, summoned by Hülegü to legitimate Mongol rule. In response to the question put to the hesitant jurists by the Mongol sultan, Ibn Ṭāwūs was the first to step forward and rule that a just infidel ruler was preferable to a tyrannical Muslim ruler. The clear implication of this ruling is that justice is more important than Islam for the legitimacy of rulership. Ibn Ṭāwūs then accepted the office of the *naqīb* of the ʿAlids, an office he had earlier declined to accept from the caliph.[6] Another Shiʿi notable who secretly met Hülegü before the conquest of Baghdad and received a decree of appointment from him was Sadīd al-Dīn Yūsuf, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, the father of the ʿAllāma.[7] The ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī himself became highly influential at the court of the Īl-Khānid ruler, Öljeytü, for whom he wrote a book on the imamate, the *Minhāj al-karāma.* He succeeded in converting the Īl-Khānid sultan to Imāmī Shiʿism, and even persuaded him to conspire to have the *khuṭba* delivered in the name of ʿAlī in Mecca, but the scheme was aborted by Öljeytü's untimely death in 716/1316.[8]

Once the incumbency of the norms of the *sharīʿa* was established irrespective of the issue of the legitimacy and qualifications of the ruler, the Shiʿis had acknowledged that there had to be public authority in the absence of the lawful Imam. The next question was: *whose* public authority? The ruler's or the jurist's? (The Caliph was excluded as the usurper of the right of the House of ʿAlī.) During the first stage in the Būyid era, the tendency had been either to simply declare the continued prevalence of the norms of the *sharīʿa,* or to transfer the Imam's functions to the just ruler. In the Mongol period, the Muḥaqqiq had been more

cautious than the Būyid jurists concerning the acceptance of the office of the *qāḍī* from a tyrannical ruler.[9] But the ʿAllāma went further than them in transferring some of the Imam's functions to the temporal ruler. He maintained that the just ruler, who receives taxes and provides his subjects with protection, has the authority (*wilāya*) to give in marriage women who have no guardian, as 'the ruler is the guardian of the one who does not have a guardian.'[10] At the same time, however, he enhanced the authority of the jurists on behalf of the Imams on grounds of their knowledge of the *sharīʿa* and their expertise in jurisprudence.

The chiliastic expectation of the appearance of the Mahdi was contained by the rationalized theology of occultation in both the senses of being preserved and placed in a quarantine. After the disintegration of the Īl-Khānid empire in the 8th/14th century, the Mahdistic tenet was reactivated to mobilize the urban classes who created the Shiʿi 'Sarbadārid republic' in northern Iran. Just before the overthrow of the Sarbadār state by Tīmūr (Tamerlane) in 788/1386, however, an attempt was made to swing Shiʿism from chiliasm to nomocracy. Though abortive, it resulted in a major treatise in Imāmī jurisprudence and retrospectively acquired significance for foreshadowing the Safawid transformation of Shiʿism into a national religion by the successful hierocratic taming of the Mahdistic impetus that had created the empire in 907/1501.

The close connection between the Imāmī leaders and the Mongol rulers of Iran had repercussions for the Imāmī communities in Syria under the Mamlūks. It greatly alarmed the fiery Ḥanbalī preacher, Ibn Taymiyya (d.728/1328), and the apprehensive Mamlūk rulers of Syria ordered punitive expeditions to the Kasrawān mountain near Beirut in 692/1292 and 705/1305,[11] the second of which was particularly devastating to its Imāmī community whose members had not heeded Ibn Taymiyya's proselytizing among them a year earlier.[12] Nevertheless, judging by the number of entries in the biographical compendia, the Imāmī community grew considerably in Syria (Jabal ʿĀmil, Damascus) during the 8th/14th century, while Aleppo remained an important center of scholarship.[13] Some time before 782/1380, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Āvī, the vizier of the last Sarbadār ruler,

commissioned the leading Imāmī jurist of Syria, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Makkī al-ʿĀmilī, al-Shahīd al-Awwal or 'the First Martyr' (d.786/1384), to write a legal manual for implementation in that Shiʿi state.[14] The First Martyr, whose father and sister were also noted scholars, had been trained in Ḥilla by the ʿAllāma's son, the Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn (d.771/1370), before returning to his native land. He sought to establish himself as a respected jurist in Damascus by cultivating good relations with its Sunni jurists. In this, he ultimately failed, as he was imprisoned, condemned for heresy by the four *qāḍī*s of the Sunni schools of law, executed and crucified in 786/1384. His martyrdom was in part the result of his inability to assert his own hierocratic authority as a jurist over the chiliastic extremists in his own community. There had been a serious uprising in 717/1317 among the Nuṣayrīs under the leadership of a certain Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan who claimed to be the Mahdi.[15] Shiʿi extremism evidently remained alive in the region, and two of the First Martyr's students defected to the Nuṣayrīs and served as witnesses for the prosecution at his fatal trial. After his death, yet another student of his, a Kurd named Muḥammad al-Yālushī (or Jālushī) claimed Mahdiship and was put to death by the Mamlūks.[16] Nevertheless, he opened a new phase in the history of Shiʿi law by giving it an 'independent identity.'[17] More to the point, the book he wrote for the legal instruction of the Sarbadārs, *al-Lumʿa al-Dimashqiyya* (*The Damascene Glitter*), contains an extension of hierocratic authority that was pregnant with further implications.

The administration of justice (*qaḍā'*) is 'the function of the Imam, peace be upon him, or his deputy; and during the occultation the administration of justice by the jurist possessing all the necessary qualifications for issuing opinions (*iftā'*) is valid.' And further, 'the authority of the judge (*qāḍī*) is established by reputation (*bi'l-shiyāʿ*) or by the testimony of two just witnesses.'[18] The last statement has a sectarian character, with reputation and recommendation of two just members of community instead of any formal appointment. Nevertheless, 'the jurist possessing all the necessary qualifications for issuing opinions' is placed immediately in place of the 'deputy' of the Imam. The same intimation

occurs in the discussion of the congregational prayer which should be held only 'with the Imam or his deputy, even if the latter is a jurist.'[19] Of greater consequence not just for the authority but also for the financial power of the Shi'i jurists were the opinions reported by the First Martyr in connection with the religious tax, *zakāt*:

> Its payment to the Imam is incumbent if he demands it in person or through his collector. It is said that this is the same with the jurist during the occultation if the latter demands it in person, or through his agent, because he is a deputy to the Imam like the collector, and perhaps with stronger reason. The payment to them without their demanding is more virtuous, and is even said to be incumbent.[20]

II

Shah Ismā'īl's Mahdist revolution in 907/1501 was the starting point of the transformation and establishment of Shi'i Islam as the national religion of Iran. The consolidation of the Safawid revolution, however, required the routinization of chiliastic charisma into a stable structure of authority. Monarchy and hierocracy were the super- and subordinate components of this structure of authority. The architect of the new hierocratic system of authority was Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Karakī (d.940/1534), a Syrian like the First Martyr, who unlike the latter responded to the invitation of the Safawid ruler and migrated to Iran.

For some three decades, al-Karakī made a considerable contribution to the establishment of Shi'ism in Iran both at the theoretical and the practical levels. He addressed a number of specific issues in public law. In a treatise written on the land tax (*kharāj*) in 916/1510, for instance, he justified the tax, the acceptance of office and stipends from the ruler.[21] What is more interesting, however, is that al-Karakī forward his opinions as the deputy of the Imam during his occultation, using the expression 'general deputyship/vicegerency' (*niyābat-i 'āmma*) of the Imam in his absence to denote the authority of fully qualified jurists like himself.[22]

Al-Karakī's main legal work, the *Jāmiʿat al-maqāṣid*, is a commentary on the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's *Qawāʿid al-aḥkām*. It was written, so he tells us in a short preface, as a way to discharge some of his obligations towards the exalted, victorious, monarchical, ʿAlid, Safawid empire (*dawla*).[23] Al-Karakī continues the preceding sectarian trend of transferring the Hidden Imam's jurisdictions to the jurists. The Imam's authority to marry women without guardians, for instance, is transferred to the jurist in preference to the ruler. The transfer of the Imam's function of holding the Friday congregational prayer to the jurist is more significant. Glossing the ʿAllāma's statement in the *Qawāʿid*, that the holding of the congregational prayer required 'the just ruler (*al-sulṭān al-ʿādil*) or whoever he orders to do so,'[24] al-Karakī states:

> According to our consensus, the incumbency of the congregational prayer is conditional upon the just ruler (*al-sulṭān al-ʿādil*) who is the infallible Imam, or his deputy in general, or his deputy for the congregational prayer. The Prophet, peace be upon him, appointed congregational prayer leaders – and so did the caliphs after him – as he appointed judges.[25]

The reason is that,

> the secure jurist who has all the qualifications for issuing opinions is appointed (*manṣūb*) by the Imam; therefore his ordinances (*aḥkām*) are effective in helping him to implement the *ḥudūd* and to adjudicate among the people is incumbent.[26]

He further claims that the Shiʿi consensus is that the holding of the congregational prayer is conditional upon the presence of the Imam or his deputy, and therefore, 'the act of congregational prayer during the occultation is not laid down by the sacred law (*la-yashraʿ*) without the presence of the fully qualified jurist.'[27]

The idea of 'appointment' is linked to that of being a 'deputy in general' by claiming that the Imam has 'indeed appointed a deputy in a general matter, as in the saying of [the sixth Imam Jaʿfar] al-Ṣādiq reported by ʿUmar b. Ḥanẓala: "I have indeed appointed him an authority [*ḥākiman*] upon you".'[28] Important traditional backing of the notion of 'appointment' is offered in the discussion of the religious tax, *zakāt*, after adducing the above-

mentioned statement by the First Martyr to establish the 'generality of deputyship.'[29] Here al-Karakī refers to 'the tradition (*riwāya*) of appointment that was issued by the lord of time' as of a specially important proof of the authority to adjudicate of the jurist, who is thus made 'one of those in authority to whom God has made obedience incumbent [Qur'an 4:59] upon us.'[30] The religious taxes are therefore categorically payable to the 'jurist possessing all the qualifications for issuing opinions and adjudication' as the 'deputy of the Imam.'[31] With this discussion, al-Karakī's 'rational' arguments for 'general deputyship/vicegerency' of the jurists are buttressed by the two main 'traditional' proofs of their *ex ante* appointment by the Imams – namely the Tradition from Ibn Ḥanẓala and the decree of the Hidden Imam to the Shīʿa, which sets 'the relators of our Traditions' as 'my proofs upon you, as I am the proof of God upon them.'

The impact of al-Karakī's jurisprudence was not confined to Iran and travelled to other Shiʿi communities, notably in Syria. A generation later, the last important member of the First Martyr's legal school, Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī, al-Shahīd al-Thānī or 'the Second Martyr' (d.965/1558), incorporated al-Karakī's ideas of 'general deputyship' and *ex ante* 'appointment' by the Imam into his gloss on *al-Lumʿa al-Dimashqiyya* of the First Martyr. Glossing the qualifications for issuing opinions in the passage on the administration of justice cited above, he includes 'the *ijtihād* in the norms of the *sharīʿa* and its principles,' and 'the four principles, namely the Book, the Tradition, Consensus and the rational proof.' Each of these is explained in detail, and the discussion is concluded with an affirmation of hierocratic authority:

> When these qualifications obtain for a *muftī*, it is incumbent upon the people to refer their disputes to him and ... to abide by his verdict because he is indeed appointed (*manṣūb*) by the Imam.[32]

Zayn al-Dīn's gloss on the unspecified deputy of the Imam in connection with holy war[33] fills in a Karakīan specification: 'the deputy may be special, appointed for the *jihād*, or general; and the general [deputy], such as the jurist (*ammā al-ʿāmm ka'l-faqīh*)

is authorized [with respect to most types of *jihād*] during the occultation.'[34]

In short, thanks to the complete occultation of the Imam, established by the Būyid doctors and reinforced by the doctors of the Mongol era, the Shi'i jurists had acquired public authority independently of the ruler. Al-Karakī now secured this authority upon the legal fiction of appointment by the (Hidden) Imam to the equally fictitious but nevertheless valid and legitimate office of 'general deputyship/vicegerency.' The juridical concept of a hierocratic office was definitively constructed. The Shi'i '*ulamā*' now had public authority on behalf of the Hidden Imam. This public authority was, however, not institutionalized. Al-Karakī's discussion of the appointment, dismissal and remuneration of judges and judiciary employees remained abstrusely ethical and barren, and devoid of concrete organizational implications.[35] Hence, pluralism in authority, characteristic of all jurists' laws, obtained; in fact, all of al-Karakī's major rulings were disputed by his arch-rival, the pious and acerbic jurist, Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭīfī.[36] Nor was there much by way of public law in the Shi'i law books.

Monarchy was the dominant fact of the Safawid political organization and the Shi'i hierocracy was subordinate to it. Monarchy consisted of a system of personal authority, characterized as patrimonialism by Max Weber, in which the ruler delegated his personal authority to his appointees. Public law would take the form of decrees and promulgations by the ruler. The public law of Shi'i Iran was accordingly supplied by the ruler. During much of his reign (930–984/1524–1576), Ṭahmāsp applied the *qānūn-nāma* of Uzun Ḥasan (d.882/1478), 'who was the most just of kings on earth.'[37] But later, he issued his own Ordinance (*ā'īn*) on the Law of Monarchy (*qānūn-i salṭanat*). This *ā'īn* and *qānūn* refers to the Safawid dynasty as the House of Prophethood and Authority (*wilāyat*), and sets forth the general principles of statecraft. It consists of 69 articles, containing ethical precepts on the proper conduct of the officials, norms enjoining the maintenance of fair prices and prevention of hoarding, the promotion of agriculture and handicraft and the protection of the animal resources of the country, rules concerning the policing of towns and roads,

and a number of specific directives such as those concerning orphans, women and homosexuals. Employment of spies, which figures prominently in the statecraft literature as the mechanism of gathering intelligence, also receives considerable attention (articles 46–49).[38] The Shiʿi law, established in Iran by Shāhs Ismāʿīl and Ṭahmāsp, did have some impact on the contents of this public law of the Safawid lands, and accounts for the prohibition of wine and music (articles 58–60). But there was no systematic attempt to reconcile the *sharīʿa* and the public law. Article 55 assigns the administration of the property of those deceased without an heir to the governors. According to the Shiʿi law, this is one of the functions of the Imam. Ṭahmāsp or his legal advisors do not transfer the Imam's authority in this regard to the ruler, and through the latter's delegation, to the governors. In fact, they show no familiarity with the content of the *sharīʿa* on this or other points. It was left to the *ʿulamā'* of a later age, who had the monopoly over the knowledge of the sacred law, to bypass this and other public regulations of the rulers and transfer this function of the Imam to themselves.[39]

In contrast to political authority, however, the notion of juristic authority was increasingly disengaged from the personal, patrimonial nexus, thanks to the occultation of the Imam. This disengagement became complete with al-Karakī's powerful legal fiction that produced a concept for the purely impersonal authority of the jurists. The Shiʿi jurists could consider themselves appointed to the office al-Karakī defined as General Vicegerency. The appointment, however, did not depend on any act of delegation by any actual ruler; it had been, or was being, made in perpetuity by the Hidden Imam. On the other hand, the enforcement of the *sharīʿa* was never institutionalized through the state. The Shiʿi law remained a jurist's law, inevitably producing a pluralistic structure of authority in which each *mujtahid* could partake of the collective authority pertaining to office of General Vicegerency.

III

The question not addressed by al-Karakī was the relationship between the newly legitimated, impersonal hierocratic authority and the old, personal and patrimonial authority of the king. It could be addressed only awkwardly within the framework of jurisprudence and required the distinct literary genre on ethics and statecraft that had been developed to express the normative order of patrimonialism. The revival of philosophy in the 11th/17th century and the integration of the rational (*maʿqūl*) sciences into the curriculum of the madrasas, made this new genre readily available as practical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i ʿamalī*), with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* serving as the model treatise. In his popular exposition of Shiʿi theology, *Gūhar-i murād*, dedicated to Shāh ʿAbbās II, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (d.1072/1661–62), followed the Muslim philosophical tradition in including rulership as a topic in the philosophical theory of prophecy,[40] and appended a chapter on ethics. Lāhījī differentiates between prophecy and kingship, and divides the functions of prophecy into the maintenance of order and the guidance of mankind to salvation.[41] He also divides the goals of practical philosophy into the study of common and invariable laws, atypically called 'policy' (*siyāsat*),[42] and their implementation, which varies from time to time and society to society and is called 'kingship and rulership' (*mulk va salṭanat*). What is more important to note is that the functions of the prophet and the ruler were unified only in the Prophet Muḥammad and *not* in other prophets, who always needed kings.[43] The effect of this rather original theorizing is the endorsement of what I have called the theory of the two powers. According to this theory, God has chosen two classes among mankind for investment with authority: kings for the maintenance of order, and prophets for the guidance and salvation of humankind.[44] Lāhījī, however, offered no explicit discussion of Shiʿism at this point. It was Lāhījī's younger contemporary, Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzawārī (d.1090/1679–80), the Shaykh al-Islām of Iṣfahān under ʿAbbās II (1052–1077/1642–1666), who addressed the issue of monarchy in relation to hierocracy from the two perspectives in two different works, one in jurisprudence, the other in statecraft.

In Sabzawārī's treatise on law, *al-Kifāy fi'l-aḥkām*, many of the rigidities of Shi'i jurisprudence that bore the indelible mark of the sectarian period are evident. These militated against the legal conceptualization and institutionalization of public authority. Rigidity of the jurisprudential method seems to account for the carrying over, stereotypically and without adjustment, of the prohibition of resort to *quḍāt al-jawr* (tyrannical, i.e., non-Shi'i judges) (f. 131b), an obviously sectarian feature of Shi'i law. More serious were the obstacles to legitimate public authority. Although, following al-Karakī, Sabzawārī legitimizes such evident practical results of the exercise of public authority as taxation and the granting of land and emoluments, his justification not only remains tortuous, but also continues to imply the illegitimacy of the ruler. The sectarian conception of caliphal illegitimacy is thus ambiguously carried over into the context of Shi'i, national rule. Sabzawārī's discussion centres around the lawfulness of paying taxes and receiving remuneration from a tyrannical ruler (*sulṭān al-jā'ir*). Rigidity of the jurisprudential method cannot by itself account for the stereotypical perpetuation of this sectarian feature, and one must add the interest of the jurists as a class to enhance hierocratic vis-à-vis patrimonial authority. It is hardly surprising that Sabzawārī seeks to enhance hierocratic authority proper and expand its scope as a matter of course, as in his ruling in favour of the entitlement of the jurists to *khums* during the occultation of the Imam (f. 23a). More intriguing are his invidious contrasts between hierocratic and political authority.

Sabzawārī's basic argument is that public interest, the interest of the Muslims (*maṣāliḥ al-Muslimīn*) requires that *kharāj* be levied on the land, and that the state land be managed effectively, even if the ruler is tyrannical. The underlying assumption is that anything that is in the interest of the Muslim public is implicitly sanctioned by the Hidden Imam, and it rests on the same logic as the one shared by the medieval Sunni and Shi'i views on the necessity of lawful management of public life irrespective of the qualities of the ruler. Sabzawārī now interjects a distinctively clericalist opinion. If the hierocratic judge (*al-ḥākim al-shar'ī*), as 'the deputy of he who is entitled [to rule] (*al-mustaḥaqq*), peace

be upon him,' i.e., the deputy of the Hidden Imam, has the possibility to avail himself of taxes, 'it is incumbent upon him to spend them in the interest of the Muslim public, and if there is not such possibility, the authority in the matter rests with the tyrant (*al-jā'ir*)' (f. 37b). Promotion of clericalism is even more evident in the following opinion of Sabzawārī:

> If the hierocratic judge can get control over these taxes, the manifest view is that this is permissible. It is better to seek the permission of the hierocratic judge concerning what the tyrant gives one ... [45]

What is most interesting in these passages is the new and invidious juxtaposition of the hierocratic judge and the tyrannical ruler. The kind of accommodation permitted by the jurisprudential method, with the added restriction imposed by the jurist's class interest, can thus be seen to fall far short of what the ruler desired and what was necessary to secure popular legitimacy for monarchy. To legitimate the public authority of the monarch and determine its normative regulation, Sabzawārī had to adopt the alternative perspective and literary genre which was readily available.

In his massive and widely circulated compendium on political philosophy, *Rawḍat al-anwār-i ʿAbbāsī*,[46] dedicated to ʿAbbās II in 1663/1073, Sabzawārī can be much more straightforward and explicit in his reconciliation of kingship and the Shiʿi theory of imamate. He begins the book in the name of ʿAbbās II, the king who had made 'the establishment of the law (*qānūn*) of the splendid *sharīʿa* the instrument of ordering the interests of the public (*maṣāliḥ-i jumhūr*),' and who is 'the King of Kings and Shadow of God.'[47] The Lawgiver is indeed the Prophet, and 'the just ruler...is called Imam and God's Caliph.' However, when the real Imam is in occultation,

> the people inevitably need a king who lives by justice and follows the custom and tradition (*sīrat va sunnat*) of the real (*aṣlī*) Imam ... who commands the good and forbids the evil and keeps the roads safe ... In short, when the king is in a position to follow the true Imam in so far as possible, to secure the good traditions of the sacred law in every sphere, and to act according to the law

> (*qānūn*) of justice, the benefits of his existence are such that the pen and the tongue cannot describe. Such a king is closest to God, and his prayer is answered ... He is in truth the soul of this world.[48]

This justification was in line with the Safawids' coupling of their royal legitimacy as kings with their charisma of lineage as the lieutenants and alleged descendants of the Immaculate Imams.[49] However, Sabzawārī[50] follows the idea of the two powers typical of medieval Muslim political thought[51] in recognizing the differentiation of 'the office (*manṣib*) of prophecy' and 'the office of rulership (*salṭanat*).'[52] Sabzawārī offers not only extensive citations from al-Ṭūsī and other writers on practical philosophy, but also many of the tales and aphorisms in the statecraft literature from Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ onward. The statecraft literature is mined for extensive citations on the manners and customs of ancient kings as a normative model. Drawing heavily on the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* and other works on ethics, Sabzawārī incorporates the Persian norms of statecraft and social justice, the latter consisting of differential distribution of goods and offices among the four social classes according to their respective merits. However, he goes further than Ṭūsī in the identification of equity with the rules of the *sharīʿa*, and in enjoining the king to support its interpreters – the '*ulamā*' and the jurists.[53]

Sabzawārī's admonishments[54] concerning the evils of wine drinking and the praiseworthiness of repentance, as done famously by the pious Shāh Ṭahmāsp, were specifically intended for ʿAbbās II. More generally, Sabzawārī gives his compendium a Shiʿi colouring by including a large number of Shiʿi traditions to illustrate his various ethical topics. One such group of traditions, which enjoined the sectarian ethic of loyalty and mutual help within the Shiʿi community, typically identified as the faithful (*mu'minīn*), now inadvertently acquires a new meaning as the *mu'minīn* in the context of the national religion comes to mean the pious rather that the Shiʿis.[55] The compendium appropriately ends with the text and translation of ''Alī's Covenant' (*'ahd*), or letter of instruction to Mālik al-Ashtar upon appointment as governor of Egypt, as the distinctively Shiʿi rules of government.

Sabzawārī's conception of monarchy is emphatically

patrimonial. Nowhere is this clearer than in his explanation of the analogy of the body politic: 'the king is like the soul in the body, and the officials of the kingdom are like hands, feet and members; the movement of the members without the awareness of the soul is mere convulsion.'[56] The king is the head, and any division of labour within in political organization would be convulsive without his constant personal supervision. This seems at any rate to be the assumption behind Sabzawārī's assertion that one of the greater causes of the decline and fall of the kingdom is 'the preoccupation of the king with drinking, passion and pleasure, ... and his delegation of affairs to commanders and viziers.'[57] This conception of royal authority is intrinsically personal and militates against the institutionalization of public authority as impersonal authority of office.

The contrast between the formal consequences of jurisprudence and the literary ethical genre is strikingly evident when Sabzawārī turns to the relationship between the monarch and the judges in this work. There is no abstruse legal reasoning and tortuous argumentation. The king's authority for appointing judges and prayer leaders (singular, *pīshnamāz*) is taken for granted and considered crucial for the order of the realm. 'The office of the judge and the administration of the sacred law is of utmost importance ... It is therefore incumbent on the king not to appoint unqualified persons to this great office.'[58] Furthermore, the manner of the ancient ruler to honour the judges by appearing in their courts should be followed.[59]

It is interesting to note indications of considerable infighting among the religious professionals in the mid-17th century in Sabzawārī's chapter on the norms of royal behaviour toward the learned. Some prayer leaders and preachers are criticized for Sabzawārī's strictures for their fanaticism and incitement of the masses against the true '*ulamā*' who are branded as infidels because of their interest in Sufism or philosophy.[60] More interesting still is the passage that brings out the uneasy compatibility of the impersonal, hierocratic conception of authority and superordinate patrimonialism. The appointment of the market police (*muḥtasib*)

for the ordering of *sharʿī* affairs in the protected kingdom is mentioned among the functions of the king. Yet we are told

> If a man of learning and piety should take it upon himself to eliminate an evil without having been appointed to do so by the ruler, the ruler (*sulṭān*) should not contradict him, and should not strengthen his opponents.[61]

This opinion highlights the problematic implications of the dual structure of patrimonial and hierocratic authority in Shiʿi Iran, and can serve as a final reminder of the limits to the institutionalization both of positive legal norms and of authority in functionally defined public offices.

As implied by Sabzawārī's criticism of the fanatical preachers and prayer leaders, Shiʿism as the national religion of Iran in the 11th/17th century was not monolithic. The variant I have referred to as 'gnostic Shiʿism,'[62] in contrast to the orthodox and official, was favoured by ʿAbbās II, to whom its chief representative, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d.1090/1679) dedicated a very original, not to say eccentric, *Kingly Mirror* (*Āʾina-yi shāhī*). Mullā Muḥsin approaches kingship from the perspective of the theosophy of cosmic governance. The governance of human beings can be internal by intellect or nature, or external by the sacred law (*sharʿ*) or the common law (*ʿurf*). Monarchy belongs to the common law. Given the inferiority of the latter to the sacred law, which emanates from the perfect Intellect, monarchy in relation to the sacred law 'is like the body in relation to the spirit, or like the slave in relation to the master.' It follows that the acts of monarchy 'are incomplete and are only completed by the revealed law, while the acts of the revealed law are complete and have no need for monarchy.'[63] No legal implications, however, are drawn from this abstract statement based on the philosophical identification of Intellect and the revealed law. We can be certain that Mullā Muḥsin, who was strongly inclined toward the Akhbārī position, did not intend it to reinforce hierocratic authority.

The massive vernacularization and popularization of Shiʿi beliefs by Sabzawārī's successor as the Shaykh al-Islām of Iṣfahān, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d.1110/1698), included the justification of kingship and just rule, and a translation of ʿAlī's Covenant.

Majlisī's writings, however, included no philosophical discussion and were more narrowly based on the Shi'i traditions than Sabzawārī's.[64] 'Alī's Covenant contained many of the norms of ancient statecraft, notably the just treatment of the subjects by the ruler, and with its several Persian translations, assumed a central position in the political ethic of Shi'i Iran. It is interesting that in a free Persian translation of the covenant, dedicated to one of the last Safawid grand viziers on the occasion of his visit to Mashhad, the theory of the two powers is plausibly read into a clause which is rendered as 'Alī's 'command to propagate the ways of the just kings of the past and the following of the Prophetic Tradition.'[65]

IV

The Safawids succeeded in establishing a stable Shi'i normative order consisting of monarchy and hierocracy. There was, however, no development in the public law of monarchy, and Sabzawārī in the second half of the 11th/17th century was content to reproduce medieval Persian ideas on statecraft and political ethic within the framework of practical philosophy. Administration and taxation were regulated by the decrees of the rulers.[66] The works on jurisprudence we have examined made no contribution to judiciary organization or administrative law, and when they addressed issues in public law, as in the discussion of the land tax and remuneration and stipends from the rulers, they merely offered a blanket justification of customary practices by removing ethical objections of the sectarian period, falling far short of any positive regulation. The idea of hierocratic authority, by contrast, increasingly disengaged itself from the personal, patrimonial matrix. With al-Karakī's powerful legal fiction of General Vicegerency, the jurists could consider themselves invested, *ex ante* and in perpetuity, by the Hidden Imam, thus possessing impersonal, official, authority. In practice, the institutionalization of hierocratic authority could not proceed as simply as in al-Karakī and the Second Martyr's legal arguments, and was contested by the clerical notables (*sayyid*s) who controlled landed estates and held important offices,

most notably as *ṣadr*s.[67] Contestation did not take long to appear at the theoretical level either, and Akhbārī traditionalism in fact slowly gained the upper hand over jurisprudential rationalism in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. More significantly, the enforcement of the *sharīʿa* through the state was never effectively institutionalized, as it was in the Ottoman empire in the same period, and Shiʿi law remained a 'jurist's law' with its typical pluralism that in fact became accentuated during the next two centuries.

Nevertheless, on the foundations laid by al-Karakī, an independent hierocracy would stand after the collapse of the Safawid empire in the 12th/18th century, and would generate the dual structure of authority distinctive of Iran in the Qājār period. Some century and a half after sectarian Shiʿism had become the national religion of Iran, Sabzawārī juxtaposed the 'hierocratic judge' (*ḥākim al-sharʿī*) and the 'tyrannical ruler' (*sulṭān al-jā'ir*). The juxtaposition pointed to the potential tension in the relation between the two powers in the Shiʿi national political community of Iran, and thus to the hierocracy-state conflict of the subsequent centuries that culminated in the overthrow of monarchy and the establishment of a Shiʿi hierocratic republic in 1979.

Notes

1. See W. Madelung, 'Authority in Twelver Shiism in the Absence of the Imam,' in *La Notion d'autorité au Moyen Age: Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Paris, 1982), pp.163–173.

2. S. Amir Arjomand, 'The Consolation of Theology: The Shiʿite Doctrine of Occultation and the Transition from Chiliasm to Law,' *Journal of Religion*, 76 (1996), pp.548–571.

3. See W. Madelung, 'A Treatise of the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the Legality of Working for Government,' *BSOAS*, 43 (1980), pp.18–31.

4. This similarity is already evident in the 4th/10th century: 'All the *ʿulamā'* have agreed unanimously that the Friday prayers, the two festivals... warfare against the infidels, the pilgrimage, and the sacrifices are incumbent upon every *amīr* whether he be upright or an evildoer; that it is lawful to pay them the land tax ...to pray in the cathedral mosques they build and to walk on the bridges which they construct. Similarly,

buying and selling and other kinds of trade, agriculture and all crafts, in every period and no matter under what *amīr*, are lawful in conformity with the Book and the Sunna. The oppression of the oppressor and the tyranny of the tyrant do not harm a man who preserves his religion and adheres to the Sunna of his Prophet, ... in the same way that if a man, under a just Imam makes a sale contrary to the Book and the Sunna, the justice of his Imam will be of no avail to him.' Thus the Ḥanbalī Ibn Baṭṭa (d.387/997); cited in B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago, 1988), p.101. His Shi'i contemporary, the Shaykh al-Mufīd (d.413/1022), states the following 'rational proof' for the necessity of the existence of an infallible Imam in every age: 'This is so because it is impossible for the duty-bound believers (*mukallafūn*) to be without an authority (*sulṭān*), whose presence draws them closer to righteousness and keeps them away from corruption, who would protect Islamic territory, and assemble the people to hold the Friday prayer and the festivals.' Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān, *al-Irshād*, Qumm, n.d., p.347.

5. Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *al-Fakhrī*, ed. H. Derenbourg (Paris, 1895), pp.452–453.

6. Ibid., p.21; R. Strothmann, *Die Zwölfer-schī'a* (Leipzig, 1926), pp.91–93.

7. 'Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-yaqīn*, as cited in Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-jannāt fi aḥwāl al-'ulamā' wa'l-sādāt*, ed. M.T. al-Kashfī and A. Ismā'īliyān (Qumm, 1390–92/1970–72), vol.8, pp.200–201.

8. H. Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam* (Paris, 1965), p.257.

9. S. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago, 1984), pp.62, 64.

10. *Tadhkirat al-fuqahā'*, cited in A.A. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shi'ite Islam* (New York, 1988), p.176.

11. Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam*, pp.256–257.

12. R.J. Abisaab, *Migration and Social Change: The 'Ulamā of Ottoman Jabal 'Āmil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736*. (Ph.D thesis, Yale University, 1998), ch.1.

13. The existence of Imami communities in Beirut and Sidon is also established by a Mamluk decree of persecution dated 764/1363. Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣīnā'at al-inshā'* (Beirut, 1987) vol.13, pp.13–20.

14. The Shahīd is said to have despatched the autograph manuscript of the *al-Lum'a al-Dimashqiyya* to Khurāsān, and then edited the copy

made there and sent back in 782/1380–81; Muḥammad b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Lumʿa al-Dimashqiyya*, ed. M. Kalāntar (Beirut, n.d. [1968]), vol.1, p.24.

15. Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam*, p.258.

16. Abisaab, Migration and Social Change, ch.1; ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.1, Introduction, pp.136–147.

17. H. Modarressi Tabātāba'i, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Law* (London, 1984), p.49.

18. ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.3, pp.62, 67.

`19. When stating that the holy war is collectively incumbent on the stipulation of 'the just Imam or his deputy,' the First Martyr, however, offers no specification of any kind for the latter; ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.2, p.381. ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.1, p.299.

20. ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.2, p.53.

21. W. Madelung, 'Shiite Discussions on the Legality of the Kharāj,' in R. Peters, ed. *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Leiden, 1981), pp.194–198.

22. Ibid., p.195

23. The string of adjectives is longer and notably includes the terms *al-shāhiyya al-Ṣafawiyya al-mūsawiyya*; ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Karakī, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī, *Jāmiʿ al-maqāṣid fī sharḥ al-qawāʿid* (Beirut, 1991), vol.1, p.1.

24. The latter is referred to as the 'deputy' in the next phrase. According to A.A. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shiʿism* (Albany, NY, 1981), pp.186, 195, al-Ḥillī had held more than one opinion on the question of the Friday congregational prayer. In his alternative opinion, holding it did not require a jurist but was within the broad 'authority of the righteous believers (*wilāya ʿudūl al-Muslimīn*).' Al-Karakī does not consider this position, insisting instead on the devolution of the authority to hold the congregational prayer upon the jurist.

25. Al-Karakī, *Jāmiʿ al-maqāṣid*, vol.2, p.371.

26. Ibid., vol.2, p.375.

27. Ibid., vol.2, p.379.

28. Ibid., vol.2, p.377.

29. Ibid., vol.15, pp.421–422.

30. Ibid., vol.15, p.422.

31. Ibid., vol.15, p.425.

32. ʿĀmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.3, p.62. In addition to the regular judge, the First Martyr had allowed for the arbitrator (*qāḍī al-taḥkīm*) chosen by both parties to a case. The Second Martyr maintains that an arbitrator is

'absolutely inconceivable during the occultation, because if he is a *mujtahid* his verdict is valid without an arbitration agreement, and if he is not, his verdict is absolutely not valid by consensus... *Ijtihād* is indeed the condition for being a judge in all times and circumstances.' 'Āmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.3, pp.68–70.

33. See Note 18 above.

34. 'Āmilī, *Lumʿa*, vol.2, p.381.

35. Section on *qaḍā'* in the lithographic edition; the published 1991 edition of *Jāmiʿ* does not include the book on the administration of justice.

36. Madelung, 'Shiite Discussions,' pp.198–201.

37. *Khulāṣat al-tawārīkh*, cited in Arjomand, *Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, p.194.

38. S. Amir Arjomand, 'Two Decrees of Shāh Ṭahmāsp Concerning Statecraft and the Authority of Shaykh 'Alī al-Karakī,' in S. Amir Arjomand, ed. *Authority and Political Culture in Shiʿism* (Albany, NY, 1988), pp.250–262.

39. Ibid., p.252.

40. 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī, *Gūhar-i murād* (Tehran, 1377 Sh./1998), pp.255–260; J. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Zavāl-i andīsha-yi siyāsī dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994): Ch. 7.

41. Lāhījī, *Gūhar-i murād*, pp.293–294.

42. The more typical term would have been *namūs* or *sharīʿat*.

43. Lāhījī, *Gūhar-i murād*, pp.294–295; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Zavāl-i andīshah-yi siyāsī dar irān*, pp.272–273.

44. S. Amir Arjomand, 'Medieval Persianate Political Ethic,' *Studies on Persianate Societies*, 1 (2003, forthcoming).

45. Cited in N. Calder, 'Legitimacy and Accommodation in Safavid Iran: The Juristic Theory of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Sabzavārī (d.1090/1679),' *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 25 (1987), p.101.

46. In a good illustration of orientalist bias for 'Islamic' explanations, the late Norman Calder (ibid.) totally ignored this explicitly political treatise of nearly 900 printed pages and devoted an entire article to a few paragraphs of abstruse and tortuous legal reasoning, buried in another thick book on jurisprudence by Sabzawārī, to prove the allegedly inescapable *de jure* illegitimacy of monarchy in Shiʿism.

47. Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzawārī, *Rawḍat al-anwār-i ʿAbbāsī*, ed. E. Ghangīzī-Ardahā'ī (Tehran, 1377 Sh./1998), pp.51–52.

48. Ibid., pp.66–67.

49. A decree of appointment of a *dārūgha* by Shāh Sulṭān-Ḥusayn is

quite explicit in this respect: 'As the perfect being of our fortunate majesty derives from the light of Prophecy and Authority (*wilāyat*), obeying [our] command is more incumbent upon the God-fearing than that of other kings of kings.' M. Zabīhī and M. Sutūda, ed. *Az Āstārā tā Astarābād* (Tehran, 1976), vol.6, p.504.

50. Sabzawārī, *Rawḍat al-anwār*, p.449.

51. Arjomand, 'Medieval Persianate Political Ethic.'

52. The two, however, were unified not only in the person of Muḥammad, but also in Adam.

53. Sabzawārī, *Rawḍat al-anwār*, pp.494–501.

54. Ibid., pp.74–75, 143–180.

55. Ibid., pp.439–446.

56. Ibid., p.73.

57. Ibid., p.72.

58. Ibid., pp.603–604.

59. Ibid., p.605.

60. Ibid., p.602.

61. Ibid., p.485.

62. Arjomand, *Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, pp.173–175.

63. W.C. Chittick, ed. and tr., 'Two Seventeenth-century Persian Tracts on Kingship and Rulers,' in S.A. Arjomand, ed. *Authority and Political Culture in Shiʿism* (Albany, NY, 1988), pp.267–304.

64. Ibid.

65. Muḥammad Kāẓim Fāḍil Mashhadī, *Niẓām-nāma-yi ḥukūmat*, ed. M. Anṣārī (Qumm, n.d. [1994]).

66. M. Zabīhī and M. Sutūda, ed. *Az Āstārā tā Astarābād*, vol.6.

67. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam,* pp.123–129.

19

ʿUmāra's Poetical Views of Shāwar, Ḍirghām, Shīrkūh and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn as Viziers of the Fatimid Caliphs

Pieter Smoor

In the history of Sawīrus b. al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, we find the sad tale of the Banū Ruzzīk, which describes the demise of this dynasty of Fatimid viziers.[1] The last representative of the dynasty was Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ. Ruzzīk was given many honorific titles, such as Glory of Islam, The Righteous One, Supporter of the Dynasty and Treasure Chest of the Imams (Majd al-Islām, al-ʿĀdil, Nāṣir al-Dawla and Dhukhr al-Aʾimma). But at the very end, all this could not save him from having to remain quite alone, deserted by his retainers, with only his horse and some heavy pack-saddles filled with part of the state treasury. Finally he tried to escape to the wide open spaces of the desert. But there he was captured and confined to prison in Cairo for several months until he was killed in 558/1163.[2]

Ruzzīk was succeeded by Shāwar to the vizierate. At first Shāwar had been governor of Qūṣ, a town in southern Egypt. However, an uncle of Ruzzīk had harboured feelings of hatred against him and had dealt badly with him during the Ruzzīk vizierate. Ruzzīk

himself was unsure if he should dismiss Shāwar from his function. But as Ruzzīk's father Ṭalā'iʿ was lying on his deathbed, only hours after a murderous attack (year 556/1161), he had advised his son not to do so. According to the dying father, the governor Shāwar was such a powerful and dangerous *amīr* that he should better be left in peace. However, other members of the Ruzzīk clan preferred a direct confrontation with this governor. They managed to put pressure on Ruzzīk and to realise their plans. [3]

Shāwar did not embark on a straightforward battle. Instead he retracted strategically into the wide desert regions and into the higher desert mountain plateaux with only twenty or so heavily-armed mounted soldiers. He was not found by the expeditionary forces from Cairo, and it was rumoured that Shāwar had died or had emigrated to the remote regions of the western Maghrib. But, after half a year or so, Shāwar suddenly reappeared in the regions very close to Cairo, which naturally surprised Ruzzīk. Spreading panic all around him, Shāwar was able to turn the Ruzzīk clan and its regime into a pitiful state of chaos.

Shortly after this, Shāwar began his reign as vizier and commander of the armies. Contemporary poets, amongst them ʿUmāra al-Yamanī, had to adapt to the new situation. They flocked to the palace to congratulate Shāwar upon his newly-acquired function. The major part of the laudatory poets started to describe the previous role of the Ruzzīk clan in a disparaging manner, by giving vent to their contempt for this clan, which by now had fallen. However, although his manner was aloof, ʿUmāra remained quite sympathetic in his judgment of the previous viziers. Ruzzīk's deposition in 558/1163, and the execution of the poet ʿUmāra, much later in 569/1173, meant that all the remaining part of the poet's career would evolve over an interval of some ten years.

At first there was the rule of Shāwar, and then almost immediately after, or at the same time, Shāwar's son al-Kāmil Shujāʿ reigned together with his father. The son was appointed to the important function of vice-commander of the armies; in short he was the *nā'ib*, which meant that he owned vizieral status like his father. Al-Kāmil Shujāʿ was to reign as the deputy vizier, although his subsequent power was no less than his father's, particularly

with regard to diplomatic relations with Nūr al-Dīn b. Zangī in Damascus, which were entirely dealt with by the son.[4]

The reigning period of this Shāwar clan was inadvertently interrupted by an *amīr* called Ḍirghām who seized the vizierate from Shāwar and obliged him to flee to Damascus where he sought assistance from the Sultan Nūr al-Dīn. Shāwar was successful in conquering Egypt for the second time, but this time he came from the direction of Palestine. However, in consequence of his dealings with the Turks, he ran into different problems as he was unable to find an easy way of getting rid of them again. He did not want to pay the amount of money requested by the Kurdish commander of the invading force, Shīrkūh, neither was he inclined to procure for him the feudal properties of the Turkish *amīr*s within Egyptian territory.

None the less, Shāwar succeeded at least once in expelling the Turks from Egypt by using the Crusading Franks as a counterweight. These Crusaders were in the habit of defending Jerusalem, and their King Amalric had the mistaken impression that Egypt would make a profitable addition to his Kingdom.

Eventually the complete period (i.e., the Shāwar family, Ḍirghām and the Shāwar family again) came to an end as a result of the developing military powers in Syria and Palestine.

After several military expeditions the state power in Egypt came completely under the control of Kurdish and Turkish generals led by Shīrkūh who recognized Nūr al-Dīn b. Zangī as their overlord and sultan. Eventually Shīrkūh triumphed by having Shāwar murdered during a tour of the desert area not far from Cairo. After this incident the Fatimid Caliph al-ʿĀḍid had Shīrkūh installed as the new vizier. But however strong Shīrkūh had proved to be, he succumbed very fast to a luxurious way of living. It is related that he died within only a few months as a result of consuming a huge amount of meat. It is also possible that he may have been poisoned. After lengthy negotiations it was decided that he should be replaced by his still very young nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin), whom the caliph and his court circles considered as potentially harmless.

Thus evolved an intricate play of different tendencies and

influences, resulting in a complicated situation for our poet. On the one side there was the vizierate of the Shāwar clan with the Ḍirghām interregnum of nine months, all of this under the nominal authority of al-ʿĀḍid as a spiritual leader and Imam Enlightened by God. On the other side we find the Kurdish generals Shīrkūh and his nephew Saladin under the supervision of the Sultan Nūr al-Dīn, another Light of God (this was an honorific title in the Sunni concept of religion). Finally there was a third party, the Franks with their King Amalric of Jerusalem who did not profess to Islam.

As court poet and orator of various vizierates, the poet ʿUmāra survived all these changes of regime. Only when Saladin became the last vizier of the Fatimids did ʿUmāra's career come to an end. What was the attitude of ʿUmāra to all this? In happier times when the poet first arrived in Egypt, the government was in the hands of the pious vizier Ṭalā'iʿ, an Armenian, with the honorific al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, who was a Shiʿi. As he belonged to what later became known as the Twelver or rather Nuṣayrī variety of Shiʿism, his idea of Islam was slightly different from the Fatimid Imams' which was always of Ismaili variety.

The Imam in ʿUmāra's earlier days had been a five-year-old child, in the first instance, who was succeeded in 555/1160 by his ten-year-old nephew called al-ʿĀḍid, who was to be the last Fatimid Imam-caliph. The latter occurs very frequently in ʿUmāra's poems as the praised one, the *mamdūḥ*. Al-ʿĀḍid was to receive splendid poems from the poet, in which the Imam is praised as an intermediate person of godly rank standing alone between God and humankind. Here I shall quote some lines of poetry in non-metric translation. For this I have taken the poem to rhyme *lāmiʿu*.[5]

4. The Qur'an has pronounced everything about you; in your domain both those close by and those far removed are most imperfect.
5. When seeking proximity to Allah we praise you, because you act as a screen in front of Him.
6. Among your people Allah has prophetic abodes (*ad'urun nabawiyyatun*) and an orbit (*sayrun*), from which just leadership emerges, both in secret and openly.

7. You can see him, although the veils of awe are still between him and us; thus he is neither hidden nor yet far and wide renowned.
8. And had you not wandered there, then no prince would have treated the earth with love, and no corrective power would have made a sign towards the earth.
9. You have descended from on high to the place where torrents clear themselves a path, whilst driving foaming blessings forwards.
10. Thus it is no surprise that you circle around in the air of lordship, where a bird from the constellation of the Two Eagles alights at a lower point.
11. And You have become an ʿĀḍid (Supporter) for world and religion, through whose revelation just leadership and laws have been satisfied.
12. For this religion you have been created as a heart and an eye, whilst others than you form the tissue and the ribs.
13. O Prophet of the Dahr, thus your people are shining luminous people, whose peaks rise up above even the highest ground.
14. When the Command of Allah descends upon your people, then young and old become as one.

In the new era which started with the reign of Shāwar, after the complete demise of the vizieral Ruzzīk clan in 558/1163, ʿUmāra tried to open a trustworthy relationship between himself and Shāwar. Just like the other poets at the court, ʿUmāra made his appearance in the audience hall of the new vizier Shāwar, who was also the commander of the armies. Shāwar's son was appointed to be his father's *nā'ib*, vice-general and vice-vizier.

The poet was himself aware of the inconstancy of the vizieral position, in a general sense. We hear him discussing this in a poem *yughīru-hā* especially dedicated to Shāwar, where we find the following:

41. The brilliant viziers are nothing but racing clouds: the first had already passed, when the second came along.
42. And if the comparison applies to you people, you have risen like new suns at a time when full moons have moved towards their setting.[6]

The poet remarks upon the fact that the disappearance of the Banū Ruzzīk viziers ought to be considered as a natural disaster, though one of cosmic proportions. At the same time the poet points out the guerilla tactics exercised by Shāwar. Thus the latter avoids any pitched battle engagement. Indeed Shāwar goes so far as to make himself extremely elusive. For months it was well nigh impossible to find him and his friends in the desert stretches. Shāwar finally hid himself in a cave on the fringes of the desert next to the green Nile valley and his sudden appearance in the delta occasioned great panic. When they were surprised by the onslaught of sturdy camels and fleet horses, the members of the Ruzzīk family were forced to take to flight. The Cairene residence of the Ruzzīk family was suddenly deserted.

However, when describing the fallen dynasty of the Ruzzīk, the poet remains friendly. He compares them to a large mountain called Thabīr, which had by that time sunk into the ground. An intelligent person living at the time of the much regretted death of Ruzzīk's father al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (Ṭalā'iʿ), might have been reminded of the sinking of that same mountain.[7] In the year 556/1161 when the attack on the pious vizier was perpetrated, this comparison had been applied by ʿUmāra in his moving funeral elegies. Here is the text of the poem (to rhyme *yughīru-hā*) describing Shāwar's military feats:

23. How good Your days have been in the oases! Those days whose months will yet increase the excellence of all times!
24. You straightened out the coiling ropes of cunning, whose strong cord inclined the neck of the world toward you.
25. When the horses remember those days, their neighings are reduced to a rare sound; when the sturdy camels are made aware of them, they will snort and groan.
26. There was no horseback except one which was tired of its saddle; and no camel hump except one whose saddle tended to slide toward the camel's flank.
27. You have crushed the mountains' backs with their fully loaded packs; the mountain ridges have lowered themselves as a result of your decisions.
28. Your days passed by; they departed in the evening with an

overwhelming victory and they returned in the morning, rising early and destined for a clear victory.

29. Accompanying the days, a crowned one turns to al-Fusṭāṭ which is now yours; the camel caravan of loftiness is always at his disposal, as is their fleetness of foot.
30. Whilst riding upon them you encountered the mound of the Āl Ruzzīk, whose Raḍwā mountain was split, whilst their Thabīr mountain submerged below the ground.
31. As a result of this an arm and an assistant were crushed and there is no hope of healing for that which has been broken.
32. And as for their eagles, when their nests became empty (because they had taken flight for fear of your power),
33. You gave to their posterity the most pious of deeds. Sometimes the one who destroys the lions shows kindness to the cubs.[8]

The *nā'ib* al-Kāmil Shujā', the vice-commander of the armies, is also being commended by the poet on his and his father's success. But at the same time we should take note of the poet's opinion to the effect that the disappearance of the Ruzzīk viziers should be conceived of as a rarely-occurring disaster of nature, such as one of those occasions when a meteor is perceived hitting the ground. But this meteor had only been hurled down by Allah Himself! Here is the poem to rhyme *bi-sālibi:*

> You have robbed the Banū Ruzzīk of the helmet of their majesty (*bayḍata ʿizzihim*), which had never before been terrified by a would-be plunderer.
> You have each exerted yourselves in a tug of war to achieve exalted ranks, and in front of your opponent who was losing his footing Your hand was stronger.
> They did not leave because of their weakness, but only because they had been struck by a smashing meteor hurled down by the hand of Allah. [9]

We have already found that the poet was right to compare the function of the vizierate to clouds racing in the sky. However, in other poems we find him comparing the vizierate to a beautiful woman or a shapely girl. She is being approached by suitors asking for her hand in marriage. But these *khāṭibūna* do not have

much of a chance. Only the rightful husband may be looked upon with favour. Here is one example of this situation:

24. When she [the vizierate] was led towards him, she made herself smart and walked up to him without her usual bashful manner.
25. This grade of excellence has been destined for you in particular. There is no blame in the fact that sons reach the elevated ranks of their fathers.[10]

In another poem, to rhyme *fiʿālu* (in praise of al-ʿĀdil b. al-Ṣāliḥ, i.e., Ruzzīk b. Ṭalā'iʿ), we see the picture of a beautiful woman again.[11] But now she seems to be in an excited mood: now Ruzzīk is soon expected to be his father's successor on the vizieral throne. Therefore, this shapely girl is standing peeping secretly at the fascinating figure of Ruzzīk. Actually, according to factual history Ruzzīk was at this time about fifty years old![12]

We hear the poet in his description of an imminent succession to the throne:

33. Your father [Ṭalā'iʿ] is the one by whose sword You overwhelmed the nights, and when he reigned you were both his right hand and his left hand.
34. A father who had taught the days a most splendid way of life, from which a *qibla* has risen in front of your eyes.
35. For you there is obligatory future status, a course to be run toward his enormously high elevation even though he may be long-living.
36. She [the vizierate] looks at you in a stealthy manner, with her well-protected gaze; being hidden by a veil – may it never end – and by screens.
37. She was tempted or indeed fascinated by desires, drawn towards you by your beautiful and majestic characteristics.[13]

As mentioned earlier, according to history the vizierate belonged for an interval of nine months to an outsider, a different vizier, called Ḍirghām. The latter could only be ousted from his function with the help of Turkish troops. These troops under general Shīrkūh had assisted Shāwar when the latter had been obliged to flee from Egypt, and helped him to return and sit on the throne for a second time. The poet explains this by saying that the shapely

lady called vizierate had belonged to the wrong husband, thereby meaning Ḍirghām. But happily she had remained quite barren during these nine months, so she did not give birth and did not render her husband fortunate by producing offspring. On the contrary, we are told by the poet that at the end of the nine months, the husband was overcome by disaster: he was slain and his blood soiled the sands of the desert.

This was mirrored in reality; Ḍirghām was beheaded in an unauthorized manner outside the walls of Cairo's residential area. His head was cut off, and could thus be paraded through the streets of Cairo in an elevated position on top of a spear shaft. We know of this as the poet ʿUmāra later improvised a couple of lines when he saw the actual head passing along his street which was the Khalīj road. The poet saw the blackened head as an ominous sign of the times to come.[14] But on the other hand he seems to have been quite content with Shāwar. ʿUmāra even turns a blind eye to Shāwar's treacherous dealings with Shīrkūh and the Turks.

Shāwar had renewed the term of office, both for himself and for his son. Also, other eventual lovers of the shapely lady are left vague: they never succeed in becoming her husbands. For instance we can hear how ʿUmāra congratulates al-Kāmil, Shujāʿ b. Shāwar in the poem to rhyme *tushghalu*:

28. You have taken revenge upon a group of people, for whom the giving of the details of all their behaviour would not be to their advantage.
29. They offered nothing else as the bride price (*mahr*) for the *wizāra* except what they judged appropriate for virginity, which is not unknown. [The shapely lady was still a virgin.]
30. Even if she had been named 'the possessor of a husband,' it has now become clear that she belonged to someone slain by you and lying in the sands, painted with blood. [Ḍirghām is intended here!]
31. Even if she would hide behind a veil and would turn away from you, her thoughts are still directed towards yourself.
32. You gave her a delay, a pregnancy of nine months, but she was barren and did not give birth on behalf of another than you.
33. She returned to you in a pure state. But her new-born son (*salīl*) was nothing other than a brightly blazing victory.

34. You restrained her when another asked to marry her; thus she revealed herself as both important and dazzlingly unyielding.
35. You saved her from their claws, when their hands and claws already held her in their grip.[15]

In the final instance Shāwar and his son were the winning party. The poet ʿUmāra was evidently quite contented with this result. We could well imagine that he may have liked the Shāwar family. In fact in one line he says, when addressing the son,

31. You have levelled the land by a majesty so effective that not a single cupping-glass of blood was spilled by the sword.[16]

From the point of view of his ancestry, the poet had not previously encountered much genealogical nobility in the Ruzzīk family line. He had not found more than the nobility of the sword. But in respect to Shāwar and his son, real Arab nobility was involved, or rather real 'Islamic' nobility. At any rate, according to the sources Shāwar derived from the lady Ḥalīma who had been the foster mother of the Prophet Muḥammad. She had fed the Prophet, God save and bless him, with 'her daughter Shaymā''s milk' (i.e., the milk destined for this daughter).

As for the descendants of the Prophet in the time of ʿUmāra himself, the Caliph-Imam al-ʿĀḍid presented himself as one of them. As he had felt himself too much 'walled in' (*maḥjūr*) by the previous dynasty of the Ruzzīk clan, al-ʿĀḍid had suffered. But according to historians, al-ʿĀḍid was hoping for an improvement in his possibilities as Imam. However, he soon had to realise that the reign of the Shāwar clan, though lenient in its beginnings, would become more and more tyrannical.

But many poems of ʿUmāra are nevertheless dedicated to both the viziers of the Shāwar clan and to the Imam al-ʿĀḍid. For example in the poem to rhyme *wa-kitābi*, dedicated to both al-ʿĀḍid and Shāwar, we hear ʿUmāra paying great respect toward the Imam:

7. When the glances of deep insight showed themselves to the sickle of the moon while love's passion covered their eyes with mist,
8. We stood still and congratulated the Fast upon its Supporter

(al-ʿĀḍid) whose brilliance will not be concealed for as long as the days remain.

14. Prophethood (*nubūwa*) from an ancestor has been acquired by the descendants (*bunūwa*) of whom you are one, unlike the uncles and unlike the Companions. [17]

In these lines the poet points out the pre-eminence of the Imam in Egypt over the Abbasids and the Companions, such as Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. In this period of the Shāwar clan ʿUmāra seems better informed of the Shiʿi points of theory and discussion. He clearly knows, and sometimes mentions in his poems, typical Shiʿi ideas such as the sun rising in the west, and the coming of a Mahdi, and in particular the inheritance position via the female line. The reference is of course to the oasis of Fadak which Abū Bakr and ʿUmar did not allocate to the inheritance portion of Fāṭima, as they reserved it for the treasury. I could not actually find these details in ʿUmāra's poems, where he merely implies them as being well-known to his audience. Here is the passage to rhyme *wa-kitābi* (verses 17–20):

17. Ask the remaining part of the booty: 'Who is entitled to it?' For the best answer is heard from the part which remains.
18. Is it not right for one among them to say: 'Is it not right that the people of the female line are better entitled?' For the degree of relationship cannot be hidden without an equally weighted argument.
19. As soon as the sun has risen for you in the west, each region on the earth will be given light.
20. And an ʿAlawid dawla has now returned to you: its eye has been cooled by your elevation at this moment of return.

The vizierate of the Shāwar's, father and son, would be interrupted by the interregnum of Ḍirghām, which was to last for nine months. In fact, the poet also had words of praise for Ḍirghām at the time when he was actually in power.[18] But the fact that Ḍirghām as vizier caused the murder of seventy *amīr*s whom he suspected of disloyalty, and the fact that he robbed the state treasury of a sum of money destined for the orphans' fund, made Ḍirghām so very unpopular that even ʿUmāra departed from his usual custom of praising a vizier who had been ousted.[19]

The poet attempted to describe the period of the interregnum as a nine-month pregnancy which failed to result in the birth of a child. The vizierate was compared to a woman who remained true to her original lover, that is, she stayed loyal to the Shāwar clan (and did not transfer her loyalty to Ḍirghām).

Not only did Ḍirghām commit murder because he was afraid of an insurrection, but also – according to the *History of the Patriarchs* – he had broken forty sworn oaths to Shāwar.[20] The breaking of these oaths was another reason why the poet found him unappealing. Ḍirghām is often mentioned in poems dedicated to Shāwar or to his son Shujāʿ al-Kāmil. From later poetry we can see that Ḍirghām is nothing more than a treacherous member of Shāwar's court. In the poem to rhyme *wa-kitābi* (note 17 *supra*) we find that the poet describes Shāwar as a vizier who had been successful and is a friend of the personification of victory:

28. He is Abu'l-Fatḥ (the Father of Victory), he who summons the people to the right path by means of the touchstone of danger or else by discerning speech.
29. His victories joke with him, showing all kinds of pride, just like the cup of friendship which causes friends to laugh.
30. He is a vizier, for whom the vizierate yearned on the first occasion and again on the second occasion without any kind of beseeching.
31. On the first occasion the courtiers who were the objects of his love betrayed him, for many a beloved one is a snake beneath his gown.
32. Then the vizierate came for the second time desirous of peace (*tabghī'l-ṣulḥa*), but he was not content until several necks had been severed.

I assume that the Imam is here being congratulated on the position he always held, but Shāwar is also being congratulated, because of his return to power after Ḍirghām's death in the desert sands outside Cairo's walls.

From our study of ʿUmāra's poems, we get the impression that he was happy with Shāwar as master of Egypt. At this point Shāwar was still capable of giving him his salary as a poet of laudations.

It is certainly amazing to read in ʿUmāra's non-poetic *Memoirs*

how different they are in their judgement. But what is more, we can see how the poet was especially critical when discussing the *nā'ib*, the vice-commander al-Kāmil Shujā' b. Shāwar. We are first informed in the *Memoirs*, that the moral characteristics (the *akhlāq*) of Shāwar were 'never blemished and had thus remained in an undamaged state, safely preserved by a certain amount of restraint and integrity.' But nevertheless something very wicked had been stealthily mingling with this attractive list of qualities. According to the poet this was an awful thing which had never been exceeded in wickedness by any other bad quality. With this in mind, in his *Memoirs* the poet points to this one bad thing committed by Shāwar, i.e., his allowing the unjust murder of the last scion of the Ruzzīk vizieral dynasty.

According to 'Umāra, the moral qualities of Shāwar should be seen, in general, as an expression of the 'limitations of his station' and a certain narrow-mindedness. But the poet also has to admit the extreme generosity with which Shāwar had always behaved towards the poet himself. However, Shāwar's son, Shujā' al-Kāmil, was depicted by the poet as a very conceited tight-fisted personality.[21] What angered the poet most was the fact that Shujā''s vanity allowed him to usurp Imāmī prerogatives: 'Something people took umbrage at was the fact that al-Kāmil ordered a bejewelled sunshade (*maẓalla*) to be constructed and had his servants carry it above his head.'[22] In Fatimid Egypt, the *maẓalla* had always been an expression of godlike authority for the Imam. Perhaps it might be considered as a symbol of the emanation of God's light in the person of the Imam.

This suggests a very elevated rank for al-Kāmil. Perhaps in the late development of the Shāwar regime he exerted more influence than his father. Al-Kāmil was particularly important as a negotiator for the interests of the Shāwar dynasty when confronting the Turks and the Kurds of Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus.[23] With this in mind, we see how 'Umāra in his later poems had to adapt his themes and his *mamdūḥ*'s name again, since he had to reckon with a non-Arab overlord.

In the Shāwar period 'Umāra had taken good care of his own

interests such as his high position in the function of court poet, and his salary and payments in kind.

This is apparent from several poetical lines such as the following couplet addressed first to the son, and then to the father Shāwar:

25. Oh Abu'l-Fawāris [Shujāʿ al-Kāmil]! My love for your dynasty is not hidden, but it needs to be clarified and proven.
26. I love Shāwar [the father] and his posterity in all sincerity; and is ʿUmāra other than a trusty friend [*ʿammār*] in your presence?

But in the last line of this same poem *bi-ītthārī* the poet allows himself to put some pressure on the son. He succinctly orders the son's personified beneficence to procure something for his table and a lining for his pocket:

40. Oh Abu'l-Fawāris! I do not demand from your beneficence such as was given before but only food and salary![24]

At this point it was time for a change. With the arrival of the Kurds and the Turks under the supreme command of Nūr al-Dīn, another government began to assert itself. Thus ʿUmāra has to prepare for this new constellation and a new range of *mamdūḥ*s who might like to be lauded in his poems.

In a newly-discovered poem (to rhyme *muqabbali*) dedicated to a brother of Saladin, we already find a reference to Nūr al-Dīn as the supreme commander, coming from his residence in far-off Syria. The violence of the Turks is also evident in ʿUmāra's praise of the sword, which might moreover allude to an honorific title like Sword of Islam:

10. I never saw such a thing like the sword: how it leads on the seeker and discovers what is desired and opens what is closed.
11. No one is as great as Nūr al-Dīn among the people of his own time; had I said, 'among all previous people,' I had not invented a lie.
12. When I count the knuckles of my little fingers to sum up the king's good qualities, he is the first among firsts.
13. The blood line [*mukhrah*, literally: 'marrow'] of the noblest

people in the towns will not be diluted, after he has ceased to be, though they have many sons.

14. He is the mainstay of the Banū Ayyūb in age and lordship; the reach of his arm is longest; gigantic is his majesty.[25]

In this poem the poet also tried to be alert and to be aware of the new categories of Muslim law which were becoming all-important.

In earlier days he had often reminded his audience of the fact that the Imam did not need any belief in authority, any *taqlīd* from previous generations. He himself was the original authority to whom *taqlīd* was due![26] At that time, the poet had also mentioned how the Imam himself was the source of any *isnād*, not being the most recent link of an ordinary *isnād*. Any *isnād* should find its highest origin in the Imam himself.[27]

But in the poem (to rhyme *muqabbali*) dealing with Nūr al-Dīn, the poet seems to allude to the idea of *ijmāʿ*, i.e., the consensus of certain *ʿulamāʾ*, within the sphere of the Sunni way of thinking.[28] We get the impression that *ijmāʿ* was considered by the poet as a new concept in that particular Egyptian climate:

14. He (Nūr al-Dīn) is the mainstay of the Banū Ayyūb in age and lordship; the reach of his arm is longest, gigantic is his majesty.
15. When he causes his dewy rain to flow in abundance over an assembly, you observe both splashing rain and a jubilant multitude.
16. A difference of opinion (*khulf*) occurred, but not with regard to the generosity of his hand; about that there was consensus (*ijmāʿ*) between both the opponent and the loyal friend.

In spite of his poems in praise of important personalities in the Ayyūbid era, ʿUmāra remains fairly unhappy about his position and the compensation he receives as laudatory poet. Even the various eulogies dedicated to Kurdish generals and members of the Ayyūbid family clan do not help to improve his position in Cairo.[29]

ʿUmāra's longish poem of praise and complaint, entitled *Shikāyat al-mutaẓallim wa-nikāyat al-mutaʿallim* is well-known. The title shows that the general public of his day were inclined to consider this poem as a poem of complaint. Translated, the title means

something like 'Complaint from the Ill-judged and Vexation of the Grieved One.'

He appears to be experiencing a dichotomy: on the one hand there is his compliance with the newly-arrived dynasty of Sunni ilk; on the other hand he is not so content with his lack of acknowledgment and recompense.

According to the historian al-Ṣafadī, in his *al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, where he inserts this poem in an overview, a *tarjama* of ʿUmāra,[30] the poet might have intended certain lines of this poem to be different in form from the text as we find it presented in the *Dīwān* manuscripts. In these the text is less interesting and seems to have been expurgated. In the version offered by al-Ṣafadī, we find the following few lines which will here follow in translation, the poem (to rhyme *mūjiʿi*) was dedicated to Saladin himself:

26. O guardian of Islam [Saladin], how could you leave us, two groups in ruin: the hungry and the naked?
27. We called upon you from close by and from afar: 'Give us Your answer!,' for the Creator gives answer when invoked. [Instead of *al-bārī*, 'the Creator,' Ms. D reads differently: *al-bāzī*, meaning: '... for the hawk answers when called.']
32. Did You not guard me, for the sake of al-Shāfiʿī, for he is the most majestic mediator with the Exalted One, with whom mediation is required. [Ms. D reads differently: '... al-Shāfiʿī, although You are the most majestic mediator with the Exalted One.' This would imply that either al-Shāfiʿī or Saladin is asked to be mediator before God.]...
35. It is as if in those nights, I was a believer amongst the people of Pharaoh: I struggled to defend my religion, even though death was kept waiting. [Ms. D reads differently: ... 'though my moment of death had come.'] [31]

In these lines Saladin is being compared to the Creator and therefore we see Saladin as a demi God who should provide for the needs of the poet. Also the poet defends himself by alluding to the fact that he had been known to be a Shāfiʿite by education. The poet suggests that he suffered greatly, as he felt quite alone among the people of the supposedly wicked Pharaoh.

What is interesting however, is that these particular verses were

not the ones which roused al-Ṣafadī's anger. The historian made his criticism along totally different lines of thought. Al-Ṣafadī did not at all like the manner in which Saladin appears in the garb of a beloved one, as it were. This is a section nearer the beginning of the poem, where we hear Saladin addressed in the following manner:

16. Speak to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn who is charged with maintaining the law: 'Who is the judge who will listen to me so that I can lodge my complaint?'
17. I kept silent when the bolt was barred on the door, but the unuttered words from my serious predicament were heard to speak: 'Knock on it!'
18. I flirted like a coquettish lover and said: 'He did not approach me in an unrefined manner, nor did he apply affectation.'[32]

This last line, 'I flirted like a coquettish lover and said: "He did not approach me in an unrefined manner, nor did he apply affectation" (*fa-adlaltu idlāla'l-muḥibbi wa qultu mā atānī bi-ʿafwi'l-ṭabʿi lā bi'l-taṭabbuʿi*),' in particular, was an object of criticism for the historian; and I surmise that his opinion was shared by other Sunni believers.

The historian al-Ṣafadī gives the following comment: '[I say,] what I guess and what has been prescribed by the inkling of my flashing thought, consists of the feeling that this *qaṣīda* was one among several reasons to have him [ʿUmāra] strangled. But Allah is most informed! For kings ought not be addressed in such a manner, nor to be confronted by these wordings and this coquettish flirtation (*idlāl*). This then, will lead to humiliation (*idhlāl*). I imagine this *qaṣīda* has remained without any profit.'

Indeed, the style of ʿUmāra had earlier been too unrefined. The style had been possible with Shāwar, i.e., when the poet said 'I love Shāwar!' and then ordered Shāwar's son al-Kāmil b. Shāwar, or rather his personified beneficence, to immediately procure food and salary for him.

But in the Ayyūbid era, the poet showed a lack of respect towards Saladin in particular, especially since there had been a change of role with regard to the vizierate and the Imam. Of course, there were still other utterances of the poet which might

be used against him by the Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ*. A certain *ijmāʿ*, a consensus, may have been reached in order to declare the poet an unbeliever [*takfīr*].

In view of what he says about Pharaoh, ʿUmāra himself might have preferred to belong to the Egypt of a different era. Pharaoh, the Qurʾanic Firʿawn, in ʿUmāra's poem just quoted, had become a nickname invented by the Sunnī poets for their contemporary who had been the Fatimid Imam-caliph. Nevertheless, this elevated personage from the era which had now gone for ever, this so-called Firʿawn, had perhaps ʿUmāra's admiration. We do know how the poet described the Imam's Godly Light and later expressed his regret at the Imam's deserted palaces.

Notes

1. For more information on the vizieral dynasty of the Banū Ruzzīk, see by the present author: ''Umāra's Elegies and the Lamp of Loyalty,' *AI*, 34 (2000), pp.467–564, and ''Umāra's Odes Describing the Imam,' *AI*, 35 (2001), pp.549–626.

2. *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church known as the History of the Holy Church* (*Taʾrīkh baṭārikati'l-kanīsa al-Miṣriyya*), by Sawīrūs ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Bishop of al-Ashmūnīn, vol.3, part 1: *Macarius II–John V (AD. 1102–1107)*, tr. Antoine Khater and O.H.E. Khs. Burmester (Cairo 1968), pp.49–50 (Arabic) and pp.81–83 (English).

3. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafāʾ bi-akhbār al-aʾimma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-khulafāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad (Cairo, 1973), vol.3, pp.254, 256; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, vol.28, ed. Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad and Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1992), pp.328–329.

4. See al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.3, pp.286–287; also Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ismāʿīl al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī known as Abū Shāma, *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn al-Nūriyya wa'l-Ṣalāḥiyya*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq (Beirut, 1997), vol.2, p.14.

5. Ms. D does not contain the poem to rhyme *lāmiʿu*. Hence it is absent in the edition of Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān*. The poem only appears in Ms. Rabat, pp.128–131, and consists of 47 lines (for the text in Arabic, see Newly Discovered Poems, Appendix to ' ʿUmāra's Odes Describing

the Imām.' The introductory lines read: [Ms. Rabat:] 'In honour of al-'Āḍid, he says the following ...').

In general, for the poetical lines of 'Umāra, I made use of the text as given in two manuscripts, Ms. Rabat (Arabic League Ms 1551. Adab) and Ms. D (St Petersburg). The edition referred to is Hartwig Derenbourg:'*Oumâra du Yémen sa vie et son oeuvre*, vol.1. *Autobiographie et récits sur les vizirs d'Égypte, Choix de poésies* (*Fīhi al-Nukat al-'aṣriyya fi akhbāri l-wuzarā'i l-Miṣriyya*), (Paris 1897); vol.2. *(Partie arabe), Poésies, Épitres, Biographies, Notices en arabe par 'Oumâra et sur 'Oumâra* (*Fīhi Takmilatu Dīwān shi'ri 'Umāra al-Yamanī wa-nubadhun min tarassulātihi wa-tarājimihi wa muntakhabātun li-'Umāra al-Yamanī wa-fī sīratihi wa-fi akhbāri zamānihi wa-mu'āṣirīhi wa-fihristu asmā'i l-rijāli wa'l-nisā'i wa'l-duwali wa'l-kutubi wa-ayḍan fihristu l-buldāni wa'l-umami wa'l-qabā'ili wa'l-milal*) (Paris, 1902), edition of the Arabic text of 'Umāra's *Memoirs* in full, the Arabic text of the *Dīwān*'s poems only in part and his prose work; vol.2 *(Partie Française) Vie de 'Oumâra du Yémen* (Paris, 1904), a study in French of the *Memoirs* and incidentally a partial translation of some poems. This edition will be referred to as *Nukat Dīwān*.

6. Text according to Ms. D, folio 110 recto–111 verso. This poem is lacking in Ms. Rabat. Poem to rhyme *yughīru-hā*; ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān*, pp.71–72, 128 (verses 23–24, 38–42, 44–46, 50–55, 60) and pp.274–278 (verses 1–22, 28–38, 43, 55–62). 'He said the following in praise of the Amīr al-Juyūsh Shāwar' (in the edition, p.274).'

7. Refer to 'Umāra's elegy to rhyme *dhāhiluh*, mourning the death of Ṭālā'i', where it says in lines 8 and 9:

> 'I [scil. 'Umāra] knew you previously as a mountain, which normally caused fear, specifically when the kingdom was beset by disasters.
> I knew you as a mountain which had sunk into the ground, although in every land it caused fear and trembling.' (''Umāra's Elegies and the Lamp of Loyalty,' p.489.)

8. From the poem to rhyme *yughīruhā*. The last verse might indicate that at this time the poet still hopes that Ruzzīk (b. Ṭalā'i'), will be able to survive, thanks to Shāwar's hospitality.

9. According to the edition of Derenbourg, this fragment is not found in Ms. D, but see *Nukat*, p.72, fragment from an Ode of Praise: three lines to rhyme *bi-sālibi*, with the following introductory words from 'Umāra: 'I praised al-Kāmil in the first vizierate with an ode (*qaṣīda*) in which the following occurs,which especially concerns the Banū Ruzzīk.' In this connection we also find another commentary from 'Umāra: 'Concerning the nobility of Shāwar, of which he had the utmost, he did not

cling to it in a miserly way, nor did he save it for later. And as for his enthusiasm in battle (*ḥamāsa*) and his violent aggression: in the dwelling places of death he remained strong in his steadfastness and well-directed in his attacks.'

10. Poem to rhyme *ʿalā'i*, in praise of al-ʿĀdil b. al-Ṣāliḥ; ed. Derenbourg pp.157–158 (verses 1, 4–7), Ms. D, folio 3 recto and verso. Ms. Rabat, pp.32–34. With the following introductory words: 'He said the following in order to praise al-ʿĀdil the son of al-Ṣāliḥ [scil., the son of Ṭalā'iʿ].'

11. Poem to rhyme *fīʿālu* Ms. D, folio 135 recto–136 verso and Ms. Rabat, pp.164–168; ed. Derenbourg, *Dīwān*, pp.307–309 (verses 1, 8–31, 54–55), *Nukat* pp.49– 59 (verses 32, 34–35, 38–40). Ms. D has the following introductory words: 'He also said the following in order to praise al-Malik al-Nāṣir b. al-Ṣāliḥ [scil., the son of Ṭalā'iʿ].' Ms. Rabat has the following as introduction: 'He also said in the aforementioned month in order to praise al-Nāṣir the son of al-Ṣāliḥ only a few days before his vizierate.' In *Nukat* p.59 we find an introduction as follows: 'I said as part of a long qaṣīda, in which I mention the *muṣāhara* [relationship by marriage] between him and the Caliph.'

12. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.3, p.257: 'His [Ruzzīk's] birthday was in Dhu'l-Qaʿda, in the year 502 or 503 AH.'

13. From the poem to rhyme *fīʿālu*.

14. 'Umāra al-Yamanī, poem to rhyme *al-riqābi* ; Ms. D, folio 26 verso, edition Derenbourg, *Dīwān* p.181, *Nukat*, p.77; also *Rawḍatayn*, vol.1, pp.130 and 133, and *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.2, p.13; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ* vol.3, p.272.

15. The poem to rhyme *tushghalu* in Ms. D, folio 148 verso–149 recto, which is missing from Ms. Rabat: 'he congratulated him, al-Kāmil [al-Afḍal, Shujāʿ] ibn Shāwar upon the month of fasting.'

16. Poem to rhyme *tuqsimu,* Ms. D, folio 171 verso–172 verso, which is missing from Ms. Rabat and from Ms. Gotha ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān,* pp.348–351 (all the verses).

17. Poem to rhyme *wa-kitābi*, Ms. D, folio 13 verso–15 recto; Ms. Rabat pp.48–51, ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān*, pp.167–168 only has lines 1–3, 7, 8, 20–29, 39–51. In Ms. B, folio 147 verso–149 recto it reads: 'He said in praise of al-ʿĀḍid and mentions his vizier, the Amīr al-Juyūsh, Shāwar, and congratulates him upon the Fasting.' In Mss. D and Rabat it says: 'He said the following in praise of al-ʿĀḍid and Shāwar.' See also *Rawḍatayn,* ed. Zaybaq, vol.1, pp.409 and 413 (old edition vol.1, p.131).

18. He [ʿUmāra] said this in order to praise Ḍirghām in a *qaṣīda*, a fragment of which describes the state of the dynasty (*dawla*) as follows:

1. Time was worried because of her (the *dawla*), but since you

have become regent, time has caused her victories to continue while remaining a loyal friend!

14. The world is not ashamed as long as you are her Imam, with as vizier the rightly guiding one, Abu'l-Ashbāl [scil., honorific title of Ḍirghām, meaning 'Father of the Lion Cubs'].

Poem to rhyme *wa-yuwālī,* Ms. D, folio 156 verso–157 recto, ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat*, pp.75–76, *Dīwān*, p.331, but missing from Ms. Rabat.

19. 'As for Ḍirghām, people abhorred the fact that he had taken money from the orphans, not to mention the murder of the amīrs and several other people in which he had also had a hand; moreover they realised that he had now become powerless when compared to Shāwar' (al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.3, p.269).

20. *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, vol.3, Part I, p.50 (Arabic) p.84 (English).

21. 'And as to greed, it was clearly written upon him and he had great insight into it.' 'Umāra in his Memoirs, his *Nukat*, p.134.

22. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol.3, p.261, mentions Shāwar's morals (*akhlāq*), and also refers to the son al-Kāmil Shujāʿ.

23. Later on the relations between 'Umāra and the vice-vizier al-Kāmil became more strained and unfriendly, if we are to believe what the poet says in his *Memoirs*. Perhaps al-Kāmil tried to take his distance from the poet, in order to improve his diplomatic ties with Nūr al-Dīn.

24. Poem to rhyme *bi-ītthārī*, dedicated to al-Kāmil Shujāʿ b. Shāwar. It is found in Ms. D, folio 95 verso–96 verso, lacking in Ms. Rabat. This poem is not found in Ms. Gotha ed. Derenbourg, *Dīwān*, pp.256–258 (vss. 1–2, 10–41). Ms. D has the following introductory line: 'He also said in praise of him [al-Kāmil Shujāʿ ibn Shāwar] ...'

25. Poem to rhyme *al-muqabbali*. The text occurs only in Ms. Rabat, pp.156–157, where the poem consists of 31 lines. Ms. Rabat has the following introductory line: 'He also said in praise of al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam and exhorted him to travel towards al-Yaman, ...'

26. For the Imam and the *taqlīd* of the Sunni school of thought, see the following fragment from a *qaṣīda* dedicated to the Imam al-ʿĀḍid, lines 30–31:

The *naṣṣ* from an imamate has no need of the *taqlīd*, because the *taqlīd* is invalidated by the presence of a *naṣṣ*.

Among the people there is nothing to bind them together (*ʿaqd*) and nothing to loosen their ties (*ḥall*) except what is derived from his management (*tadbīr*).

From the poem to rhyme *al-tawḥīdu*, Ms. D, folio 40 recto – 41 verso, Ms. Rabat, pp.73–76. Thus, according to ʿUmāra, an appointment originating from an Imām, *naṣṣ*, makes any emulation of pious forefathers, *taqlīd*, invalid and therefore superfluous.

27. About the chain of a tradition (*isnād*) leading back to an early authority, see the following fragment dedicated to al-ʿĀḍid and the son of Ṭālā'iʿ. Ms. D, folio 137 recto renders the introductory wording: 'He said in praise of al-ʿĀḍid: ...' But Ms. Rabat, p.161, has more: 'He also said in praise of al-ʿĀḍid and al-Nāṣir, on the occasion of the completion of a full year after the death of al-Ṣāliḥ, and that happened in Rajab, in the year 557/1162; and he offers congratulations and condolences.' Compare, in particular, lines 7–12:

> I swore an oath by the hill tops whose spirits are composed of watery liquid and whose bodies are stones:
> If I had praised someone outside the clan of Mohammed, I would have raised him above the constellation of Simāk al-Aʿzal
> But I have been exhorted to laud the caliphs, those who have already been praised by the verses of the Book which was sent down.
> Therefore – even though it is beyond my powers, I am giving a laudation to them, yet it appears that I have never given anything.
> For the light of poetry is concealed by the Qur'an, even as stars are hidden by the breaking dawn.
> They are people (*qawm*): who when they base the tale of elevation upon a chain of tradition (*asnadū*), they produce a most reliable tradition – a tradition linked by a chain of delivers to an apostolic emissary (*ʿan mursal*).

From a poem to rhyme *miqwali*; ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān*, p.309, Ms. D, folio 137 recto–138 verso. In Ms. Rabat, the poem is found pp.161–164.

28. But compare also the internal use of the principle of consensus in the Twelver Shiʿi community and how the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā gave preference to the traditions along manifold ways (*tawātur*) over the single traditions (*āḥād*). See W. Madelung's review of D.J. Stewart's *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shiite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Salt Lake City, 1998), in *JAOS*, 120 (2000), pp.111–114.

29. For the importance of *ijmāʿ* in Sunni circles, see the fragment dedicated to the father of Saladin. Ms. Rabat has the introduction as follows: 'He also said about al-Malik al-Afḍal Najm al-Dīn,' Ms. D has the introductory wording: 'He also said in praise of Najm al-Dīn, father of the

Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, may Allah's mercy rest upon them both.' Fragment, lines 30–35:

> I am not a man whose position is unknown, and I do not receive a small amount of benefactions,
> Nor do I ask for alms; nor has blindness nor deafness stricken me.
> I am simply a guest of Kings, and unlike the other guests I possess both an eloquent tongue and a mouth.
> You are the noblest of those who walk on foot. Apart from You, people have praised that which they had known before.
> The manifold ways of delivering tradition (*al-tawātur*) are not something about which I have doubts. May the foundation of the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) be far removed from destruction!
> Alexandria is a harbour whose rightful owner You are; and the fire which burns there is alight through my decision.

From a poem to rhyme *muttasimu* dedicated to Najm al-Dīn (father of Saladin), Ms. Rabat, folio 201. = Ms. D, folio 175 recto. See also ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān,* pp.355–356, and Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, vol.1, pp.211–212 and 222.

30. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, vol.22, ed. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Rustam and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Naṣīr (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp.393–394 (*tarjama* of ʿUmāra).

31. Poem to rhyme *mūjiʿi*. In Ms. B, folio 112 verso–115 recto. In Ms. D, folio 116 verso–118 verso. Also in *Rawḍatayn*, vol.1, pp.222–223, where we find lines 6–8, 10–13, 15, 16, 20, 23, 26 and 27. The poem is found in ed. Derenbourg, *Nukat Dīwān,* pp.287ff, and it has the following introduction: 'He said and wrote the contents of this poem to al-Malik al-Nāṣir [honorific title of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn], without reciting it. He has described it as a 'Complaint from the Ill-judged and a Vexation of the Grieved One' (*Shikāyat al-mutaẓallim wa-nikāyat al-muta'allim*).

32. From the poem to rhyme *mūjiʿi*, according to both ʿUmāra's *Dīwān* and al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfī*.

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